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# HITLER'S Third Reich

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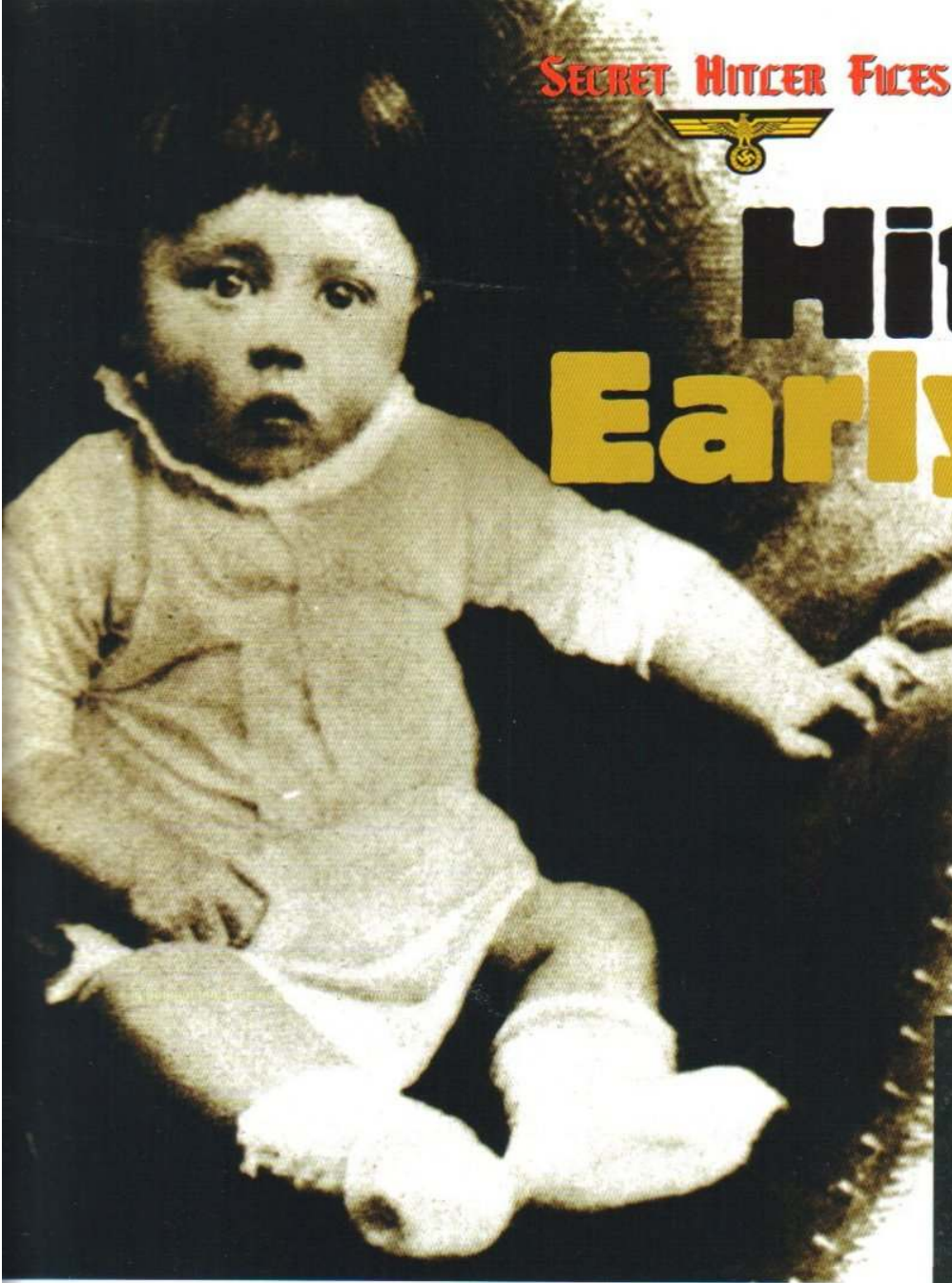
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# Hitler's Early Life

**Just who was Adolf Hitler? Could anybody in Linz at the turn of the century have foreseen that the idle schoolboy dreamer would become one of the most powerful men in history?**



*Above: The customs house at Braunau-am-Inn where Adolf Hitler (main picture, aged about six months) was born. His father was an Austrian customs official.*

*Left: The announcement of Hitler's birth in the local paper.*



**M**YSTERY SURROUNDS the origins of the man who would at the peak of his power control Europe from Greece and Crete to the North Cape of Norway. Hitler's family originated from Waldviertl, a rural area near the Austrian Bohemian border. His father Alois was the illegitimate son of Maria Anna Schicklgruber who later married Johan Georg Hiedler. In 1877, aged 40, Alois decided to adopt his step-father's name to legitimise himself.

The village priest who was filling in the birth certificate misspelt the name and Hiedler was entered as Hitler. The question of his family origins would trouble Hitler, particularly when it was pointed out that his grandmother had worked as a

maid for an Austrian Jew named Frankenberger. After she left his service, Frankenberger continued to send payments to her – was it maintenance for their child?

Alois, an Austrian customs official, had already buried two wives when, on 7 January 1885, he married his second cousin Klara Poelzl. Alois was 48 and Klara was 23 years his junior. She bore him five children, of whom only two survived infancy. Their son Adolf was born at Braunau on the Inn River on April 20, 1889. His sister Paula was





**Left: A class photo of year 4 at Leonding primary school, which Hitler attended after his father bought a house in Linz. The year was 1899, and the ten-year-old Adolf was stood out among his mostly peasant classmates.**



**Above: Klara Hitler was none too well educated. But she doted on her only surviving son, who idolised her in return. One thing which she gave Hitler were the piercing blue eyes which he used to such effect later.**

born in 1896. The relationship between the young Adolf Hitler and his ageing father was difficult. According to Hitler, the old man was given to drink and brutality, regularly beating his son with the cane or belt. It is possible that Hitler's deep capacity for hatred grew from the conflict with his father.

By contrast, his simple mother idealised her son, though even she said he was 'moonstruck'. She had hopes that he might become a priest or monk, and for two years he attended the monastery school at Lambach. At this school and others Hitler performed indifferently. He recalled that the only teacher



**Above: Alois Hitler was a comfortably-off government official. He was a stern, forbidding man whose idea of discipline was the liberal use of his belt. He was 52 when Adolf was born, and father and son never got along.**

he admired was Dr Leopold Poetsch, who instilled the first notions of German nationalism into the future dictator's mind.

## SCHOOLBOY LONER

Adolf had few friends at school. One of those few was August 'Gustl' Kubizek, who was to be a sounding board for Hitler's evolving political and racial views. Recalling these outbursts many years later, he said "His speeches seemed like a volcano erupting. It was as though something quite apart from him was bursting out of him". At 16, with no academic qualifications, Hitler left school.

His father died in 1903 and four years later, at the age of 18, he left his mother, now ill with cancer, to try his fortune in Vienna. He had a modest ability as an artist and hoped to study art. However, he was rejected twice by the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts.

In 1908 his mother, who had been in the care of a Jewish doctor named Bloch, died at Linz in Austria, suffering greatly in the process.

Hitler described his years in Vienna before World War I as "Five years of misery and woe. . . Hunger was my faithful companion. It never left me for a moment". He made a living selling hand-painted picture postcards. In later life he dramatised this period of near destitution, though in truth he received money from a small inheritance. Although he lived for a time in a working man's hostel, most of the time he had enough money to occupy lodgings. He tramped around the city, often unshaven, wearing a grubby black hat and a long overcoat reaching to his ankles.

According to *Mein Kampf*, it was here that he saw an Orthodox Jew in traditional dress, and asked himself "Could this be a German?" Many have seen this as the trigger for his anti-Semitism, but in many ways Hitler was no worse than others in Vienna at the time. He began to read the anti-Semitic writings of Karl Lueger, which were based on the theory that a conspiracy existed between the Jews and the Marxists. He read the racist journal *Ostara* – the name of the Teutonic god of beauty – written and published by Josef Lanz. Lanz was a former novice of the Holy Cross Monastery who had changed his name to Jorge Lanz von Liebenfels. The 18-year-old Hitler was so excited by the ideas in *Ostara* that he sought out the editor for a personal interview.

In cheap cafés he gave political harangues against his pet hates, which also included the weak Hapsburg monarchy. He had one unrequited 'romance' – worshipping tall, blonde Stephanie Jansten from afar. It is unlikely that she was ever aware of her unknown admirer.

In 1913 he moved to Munich, renting a room from a tailor. He continued to make a modest living selling paintings. He was now over 21, and in January 1914 the Munich police delivered call-up papers for conscription into the Austrian Army. He reported to Salzburg but failed the medical as 'too weak and unfit to bear arms' and was allowed to return to Munich.



# Hitler the Artist

## A competent draughtsman

Hitler was convinced that he was a great artist, and after spending some months in Vienna applied for a place at the Viennese Academy of Fine Arts. He took the entrance examination for the first time in September 1907, but failed. His trial work was technically competent, but lacked human feelings. Unable to accept failure, he demanded to see the principal, who reportedly suggested that he take up architecture. Determined to succeed, he applied again in 1908, but again failed. Some historians have suggested that if Hitler had entered, his energies would not have been directed to politics and the 20th Century would have been very different. However given his lack of self discipline he would probably have dropped out of the course.



Above: A pencil sketch of a ruined farmhouse on the Western Front. Hitler's wartime sketches were used by Third Reich propagandists to portray the Führer as a sensitive soul, at the same time as stressing the fact that he was also a 'front-line soldier'.



Left: A watercolour of the courtyard in Munich's 'alten Residenz', completed in 1914. It was typical of the competent if uninspired draughtsmanship Hitler displayed while scratching a living in the years before the First World War.

Below left: A more atmospheric picture painted the same year shows the ruins of a monastery in Messines, Belgium, which had been shattered by artillery fire during the first battles of the war.







*Above: Hitler once mentioned to Heinrich Hoffmann, his photographer, that he had been on Munich's Odeonsplatz in 1914 when war was announced. Hoffmann had taken a series of pictures of the event, and he set some of his assistants the task of examining every face in the crowd. Sure enough, there he was, the young Hitler sharing in the crowd's nationalistic fervour for battle.*

The assassination in Sarajevo of Arch-Duke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, by Serb extremists pitched Europe into World War I. In August 1914, he joined the crowds in Munich's Odeonplatz celebrating the entry of Imperial Germany into the war. The face of the excited young Adolf Hitler can be seen in a photograph taken of the crowd.

When war broke out he wrote to the King of Bavaria and asked to serve in his army. He was accepted and enlisted in the 16th Bavarian Infantry (List Regiment), which was composed mostly of student volunteers. After he had completed a short period of basic training, the regiment departed for the Western Front.

Hitler served throughout the war, fighting amid the mud and blood of France and

Flanders. His experiences were to have a profound influence in shaping the views of the future Führer, not least in the contempt that he felt for the monocled and bewhiskered Prussian officer class which he blamed for the carnage.

## DEFEAT AND NEW DIRECTIONS

Hitler had his last leave in September 1918, visiting Berlin and Austria before returning to join the regiment near Ypres. In October 1918 he was temporarily blinded by gas and was sent to a hospital in Pasewalk in eastern Germany. Writing about this period he said that as he weakened under the terror of blindness, a voice inside him thundered "Miserable fool, you want to weep while thousands are worse off than you". It was at this time that he decided to go into politics.

The aggressive behaviour of his father and the destruction of World War I gave Hitler a deep respect for the effectiveness of violence, or at least the threat of it – an attitude he would later bring into national and international politics. He was eventually discharged fit in November and posted back to his regiment in barracks in Munich. The

war ended as he reached Munich and Germany dissolved into anarchy.

In the chaos that was postwar Germany, Bavarian socialists set up a separatist government in Munich, but this was crushed by the Army, assisted by armed right wing Freikorps. The fear of extremists led the Army to set up its own counter-subversion operations. In February 1919, while awaiting discharge from the army, Hitler was selected for training as an 'education officer'. He was given some political instruction and in September he was sent to investigate a new group with the leftish sounding name of *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* – the German Workers' Party. To penetrate the organisation Hitler joined in September 19, 1919 as member No. 55 and later became No. 7 on the Executive Committee. He found that far from being socialist, the DAP was a right-wing radical organisation with few definite ideas and about £10 in its treasury.

From these tiny beginnings, Adolf Hitler would forge the Nazi Party, an organisation that would achieve absolute power in Germany in only 13 years, and would plunge the world in ruin a decade after that.



# Hitler the Soldier

**Brave, but a bit strange...**

Hitler was a competent soldier, working as a runner carrying messages. It was dangerous but important work and in the first year of war he was awarded the Iron Cross Second Class. The regiment fought in the Battle of the Somme in 1916. In October that year Hitler was wounded in the thigh and evacuated to a hospital at Hermis near Berlin. When he had recovered, he was posted to the reserve battalion in Munich and then returned to the regiment in March 1917 in time to fight in the Battle of Arras. He had leave in December and visited Berlin and Dresden.

The List Regiment fought in the Ludendorff Offensive in April 1918 in which the Imperial German Army almost achieved a breakthrough on the Western Front. During the fighting he is reported to have captured a French officer and fifteen men, for which he was awarded the Iron Cross First Class on August 4, 1918. The award of the medal was unusual for a junior rank.

That he was courageous can not be questioned. Besides the Iron Cross First and Second Class he received the Military Cross "Third Class with Swords" in September 1917, the Regimental Award for Outstanding Bravery and the Medal for the Wounded in May 1918, and the Service Medal, Third Class in August 1918. Yet he never rose above the rank of corporal – which was why senior Wehrmacht officers called Hitler (behind his back) the "Bavarian Corporal" during World War II. Yet Hitler's service in the List Regiment of the Bavarian infantry was to be important in his life. In its ranks were Lieutenant Wiedemann and Sergeant Amman, future members of the Nazi Party.



*Above: Hitler, wearing a traditional 'pickelhaube' spiked helmet, relaxes with fellow soldiers in a dugout. Most of his companions thought him a little strange, and he had few close friends.*



*Right: Hitler (back row, second from right) was a messenger, a highly dangerous job in those days. He was wounded several times, and was hospitalised in 1916 and 1918.*



*Left: Hitler (far left) during a break from front line service, probably in 1915 or 1916 before the Battle of the Somme. He and his companions had adopted the little English fox terrier, which had run into their trench chasing rats. Hitler named it Foxl, and as would be common later in life he showed more appreciation of the animal than of the people around him.*





# MASSACRE

## AT BABI YAR RAVINE

**The peak of the murderous activity of the SD's killing units came at a place called Babi Yar, after the German occupation of Kiev in September 1941.**

**O**PERATION Barbarossa had gone amazingly well for the Wehrmacht. The first attacks had driven deep into the USSR and by September a massive encirclement had knocked out the Red Army in the Ukraine.

The occupying German troops captured Kiev on 19 September, and began to establish a presence in the historic city. However, over the next ten days, saboteurs from the NKVD – the Soviet secret police – planted bombs in several German-occupied buildings and assassinated some German officials. Clearly, reprisals would have to be taken. And the simplest scapegoats to choose would be the Jews.

### **'RESETTLEMENT'**

Summoned to assemble at the Jewish graveyard for what the Germans called a 'resettlement action', the hapless victims – including old men, women, and their children – were marched to a location on the edge of the city, where some supposed that they were to pick up their transport.

A German military driver named Höfer was told to take his truck out to the site. After the war, he testified at length as to the horrors he had seen.

"One day I was instructed to drive my truck outside the town. I was accompanied by a Ukrainian. It must have been about ten o'clock. On the way there we overtook Jews carrying luggage marching on foot in the same direction that we were travelling.



*Above: As was usually the case in 'resettlement' operations, the Germans told the assembling Jews to bring their valuables and warm clothing. This was to convince them that they were indeed going on a journey to a new home.*

*Right: The ravine at Babi Yar, just outside Kiev, scene of one of the most horrific massacres of the war.*





# Resistance in Kiev

## Jews picked as scapegoats



Left: Many of the structures in Kiev had been booby trapped by the Soviet secret police before they fled. This, and the possibility of clandestine sabotage teams, meant that the Germans had to be very careful about which buildings they moved in to.

In spite of its astonishing defeat of the Red Army in the Ukraine, the German Army's occupation of Kiev was not without its costs. Many of the city's buildings were booby trapped, and even as the occupiers set up their administration, Soviet NKVD saboteurs began a programme of bombing and assassination.

Einsatzgruppen C was given the task of countering the problem. This is the Reich Security Service's report on the case.

The Chief of the Security Police and Security Service  
Berlin,

September 28, 1941  
48 copies (36th copy)  
Operational Situation Report  
USSR No. 97

Einsatzgruppe C  
Location: Kiev

"Vorkommando 4a has operated directly with the combat troops in Kiev since September 19. Einsatzgruppe HQ arrived on September 24. Office Building NKVD, October 24th Street, assigned and commandeered as seat of Einsatzgruppe HQ. Building evacuated this morning to move into emergency quarters in the one-time Tsar's castle.

"Town almost destroyed upon entry of troops. Numerous barricades and tank traps put up in main street. In addition, other

strong defensive installations in the town area. On September 20, the citadel blew up and the Artillery Commander and his chief of staff were killed. On September 24, violent explosions in the quarters of the Feldkommandatur; the ensuing fire has not yet been extinguished. Fire in the centre of the town. Very valuable buildings destroyed. So far, fire fighting practically without any effect. Demolitions by blasting being carried out to bring the fire under control. Fire in the immediate neighbourhood of this office. Had to be evacuated for this reason. Considerable damage done in and around the building by blasting. Blasts continuing. Also, fire breaking out."

"Up to now, 670 mines detected in buildings, according to a mine-laying plan which was discovered: all public buildings and squares are mined, among them, it is alleged, also the building assigned to this office for future use. Building being searched most assiduously. In the course of this search, sixty Molotov cocktails of explosives were detected and removed. In the Lenin Museum, seventy hundred-weights of dynamite discovered which were to be touched off by wireless. It was repeatedly so observed that fires broke out the moment buildings were taken over."

"As has been proved, Jews played a pre-eminent part. Allegedly 150,000 Jews living



Above: Citizens of Kiev cast a wary eye on a passing German despatch rider. Although a number of Ukrainians collaborated with the Germans, seeing them (for a time) as liberators from Soviet oppression, there were also many committed communists who did all they could to sabotage the Wehrmacht.

here. Verification of these statements has not been possible yet. In the course of the first action - 1,600 arrests - measures being evolved to check the entire Jewish population. Execution of at least 50,000 Jews planned."

"German Army welcomes measures and demands drastic procedure. Garrison commander advocates public execution of twenty Jews. A larger number of NKVD officials, political commissars, partisan leaders and parti-

sans arrested. According to reliable information, demolition battalion of the NKVD and considerable number of NKVD men in Kiev. This morning, enemy plots detected. Contact established with German Army and authorities."

"Participated preeminently in setting up town administration. Informants posted. Vorkommando of the Higher SS and Police Leaders arrived. Detailed reports to follow."





*Above: Jews began arriving at the assembly point by the cemetery long before the appointed time of 8 A.M. By the end of the day, more than 30,000 would have assembled, instead of the 6,000 the Germans had anticipated having to deal with.*

There were whole families. The farther we got out of town the denser the columns became. Piles of clothing lay in a large open field. These piles of clothing were my destination. The Ukrainian showed me how to get in there.

"After we had stopped in the area near the piles of clothes the truck was immediately loaded up with clothing. This was carried out by Ukrainians. I watched what happened when the Jews – men, women and children – arrived. The Ukrainians led them past a number of places where one after the other they had to remove their luggage, then their coats, shoes and overgarments and also underwear.

"They also had to leave their

**"The Germans told us to line up. I didn't wait for the next command but threw my four year-old into the ditch and fell on top of her. A second later, bloody, dying people and dead bodies started falling on top of us."**

**Nesya Elgort**

valuables in a designated place. There was a special pile for each article of clothing. It all happened very quickly and anyone who hesitated was kicked or pushed by the Ukrainians to keep them moving. I don't think it was even a minute from the time each Jew took off his coat before he was standing there completely naked. No distinction was made between men, women and children. One would have thought that the Jews that came later would have had a chance to turn back when they saw the others in front of them having to undress. It still surprises me today that this did not happen.

## THE RAVINE OF DEATH

"Once undressed, the Jews were led into a ravine which was about 150 meters long, 30 meters wide and a good 15 meters deep. Two or three narrow entrances led to this ravine through which the Jews were channelled. When they reached the bottom of the ravine they were seized by members of the Schutzpolizei, and made to lie down on top of Jews who had already been shot. This all happened very quickly. The corpses were literally in layers. A police marksman came along and shot each Jew in the neck with a sub-machine gun at the spot where he was lying. When the Jews reached that place, they were so shocked





# of Kiev's Jewish community

Once it had been decided that the Jews were to pay for the resistance to the German occupation of Kiev, the next problem was how to round them up. Kiev was a large city, and without some means of identifying the Jewish population, it might be impossible to gather as many victims as the Einsatzgruppen wanted.

As a first step, notices were tacked up around the city, calling for all Jews to gather for resettlement. They expected between five and eight thousand to respond, but the SD men were stunned to find more than 30,000 arriving at the rendezvous point on Dorogozhitskaya street. Many apparently genuinely thought that they were to be moved into provincial towns, while others thought they were to be housed in Ghettos.

From the cemetery, the assembled Jews were marched to the ravine at Babi Yar, about two miles away. Even as the mass of humanity milled around at the assembly point, the first victims were arriving at the ravine. There they were ordered to strip and were sent into the ravine where they were shot.

Все жиды города Киева и его окрестностей должны явиться в понедельник 29 сентября 1941 года к 8 часам утра на угол Мельниковской и Доктеривской улиц (возле кладбищ).  
Взять с собой документы, деньги и ценные вещи, а также теплую одежду, белье и пр.  
Кто из жидов не выполнит этого распоряжения и будет найден в другом месте, будет расстрелян.

Above:

"Kikes of the city of

Kiev and its surroundings!

"On Monday 29 September, you are to assemble at 8.00 A.M. at Dorogozhitskaya Street (by the cemetery). Bring all money, documents and valuables, and warm clothing

"Any Kike who fails to appear as ordered and is found elsewhere will be shot."



Left, above and below: Jews began arriving at the assembly point by the cemetery long before the appointed time of 8 A.M. By the end of the day, more than 30,000 would have assembled, instead of the 6,000 the Germans had anticipated having to deal with.

Above and below: The first inkling that many of the victims had of their fate must have come when they were marched to Babi Yar and told to strip.







by the horrifying scene that they completely lost their will. It may even have been that the Jews themselves lay down in rows to wait to be shot.

"There were only two marksmen carrying out the executions. One of them was working at one end of the ravine, the other at the other end. I saw these marksmen stand on the layers of corpses and shoot one after the other.

## ONE AFTER THE OTHER

"The moment one Jew had been killed, the marksman would walk across the bodies of the executed Jews to the next Jew, who had meanwhile lain down, and shoot him. It went on in this way uninterruptedly, with no distinction being made between men, women and children. The children were kept with their mothers and shot with them.

"I only saw this scene briefly. When I got to the bottom of the ravine I was so shocked by the terrible sight that I could not bear to look for long. In the hollow I saw that there were already three rows of bodies lined up over a distance of about sixty meters. How many layers of bodies there were on top of each other I could

not see. I was so astonished and dazed by the sight of the twitching, blood-smeared bodies that I could not properly register the details. In addition to the two marksmen there was a 'packer' at either entrance to the ravine. These 'packers' were *Schutzpolizisten*, whose job it was to lay the victim on top of the other corpses so that all the marksman had to do as he passed was fire a shot.

"When the victims came along the paths to the ravine and at the last moment saw the terrible scene they cried out in terror. But at the very next moment they were already being knocked over by the 'packers' and made to lie down with the others. The next group could not see this terrible scene because it took place round a corner.

"Most protested when they had to undress and there was a lot of screaming and shouting. The Ukrainians did not take any notice. They just drove them down as quickly as possible into the ravine through the entrances.

"From the undressing area you could not make out the ravine, which was about 150 meters away from the first pile of clothes. A biting wind was



blowing; it was very cold. The shots from the ravine could not be heard at the undressing area. This is why I think the Jews did not realise in time what lay ahead of them.

"I still wonder today why the Jews did not try and do something about it. Masses kept on coming from the city to this place, which they apparently entered unsuspectingly, still under the impression that they were being resettled."

*Above: Einsatzgruppen members, some of whom were Ukrainian auxiliaries, pick through piles of discarded clothing and property, looking for items of value. Many of the worst anti-Semitic atrocities which occurred in Russia took place with the willing and eager assistance of local volunteers*

*Below: Brutalised, beyond hope and without the will to resist, victims had to walk across the bodies of their families, friends and neighbours before being shot themselves. Each of the thousands of victims of the massacre at Babi Yar was killed individually by Einsatzgruppen members.*

### OPERATIONAL SITUATION REPORT USSR No.101

Chief of the  
Security Police  
and Security Service  
Berlin  
October 2, 1941

Einsatzgruppe C  
Location: Kiev

"Sonderkommando 4a  
in collaboration  
with Einsatzgruppe  
HQ and two kommandos  
of Police Regiment  
South, executed  
33,771 Jews in Kiev  
on September 29 and  
30, 1941"





# HIDING THE EVIDENCE

## CONCEALING THE MURDERS AT BABI YAR

**A**s early as the summer of 1942, the main state security office of the Reich, the RSHA, planned to obliterate any traces of the activities of the Einsatzgruppen. Paul Blobel, commander of the killers at Babi Yar, was ordered by Gestapo Chief Müller to return to Kiev. In the summer of 1943, members of the *Einsatzgruppen* conscripted about 300 labourers from Syrets, the local concentration camp, and spent the next two months digging up the mass graves (which by now included tens of thousands of Gypsies and Soviet POWs, also murdered on the site over the previous 18 months).



According to Blobel's testimony at Nuremberg, he saw one 55-metre long grave opened up. Incendiary materials and inflammable liquids were poured on the remains and they were set alight, being kept burning for more than two days.

This was too slow, and the slave labourers had to remove the bodies, stacking them on heaps of firewood. These were then doused with petrol and set alight. Bone crushing machines were brought in to destroy the remnants. Post-war Soviet writings estimate that between 70,000 and 100,000 bodies were dealt with in this way. Included in that number were most of the 300 men who had done the exhumation, though about a dozen escaped to bear witness.

The advance of the Red Army meant that the Nazis could not finish the job. Blobel's testimony at Nuremberg concluded with the words, "owing to the retreat from Russia I could not carry out my orders completely."

*Left and above: Labourers from the Syrets concentration camp work to uncover the bodies at Babi Yar. Most of the remains had been dealt with when the guards ordered the men to start building another large pyre – for themselves. Knowing what was to come, the prisoners made a mass break-out. Eleven out of 280 managed to get away.*





# STORM TROOPERS

**The *Sturmabteilung* or SA started out as Hitler's street fighters, but it grew to become a genuine mass movement – with its own appetite for power.**

**H**ITLER'S Storm Troopers formed the uniformed mass movement which was the most highly visible aspect of National Socialism. The SA was the strong right arm which protected the Führer on his rise to power, and its members were ready to fight the Nazi Party's enemies at the drop of a hat.

SA stood for *Sturmabteilung*, meaning storm or assault unit. For recruits it had drawn heavily on associations of ex-soldiers formed after World War I. The name derived from the fighting patrols employed in trench raids towards the end of the war, and the military associations provided a focus for loyalty and comradeship in the chaotic early years of the Weimar Republic. The SA proved attractive both to former soldiers and to the unemployed – and in the Germany of the 1920s there were plenty of both.

Hitler had joined the German Workers' Party 1919. At that time, Munich was a hotbed of political activity – which often took the form of violence, street brawls and beatings, and protection was provided by the Party's Defence and Propaganda Troop led by Emil Maurice. Two years later, the party having been

renamed the National Socialist German Workers Party, or NSDAP, it established the Sports and Athletics Division, which in spite of its name was a more overtly military organisation to be used for the protection of Party meetings and to break up rival meetings.

## THE SA GETS ITS NAME

In October 1921, the paramilitary wing of the party became the SA. Drawn primarily from former Freikorps members, particularly Ehrhardt's No.2 Naval Brigade which had been heavily involved in anti-Communist fighting on the Baltic before moving to Munich, it was commanded by a former naval officer, Lt Hans Ulrich Klitzsch.

The SA's first major test came at a meeting in November at the Hofbrauhaus in Munich which large numbers of Communists had tried to break up. It was one of the first of many *Saalschlachten* or 'Hall Battles' between Nazis and Communists.

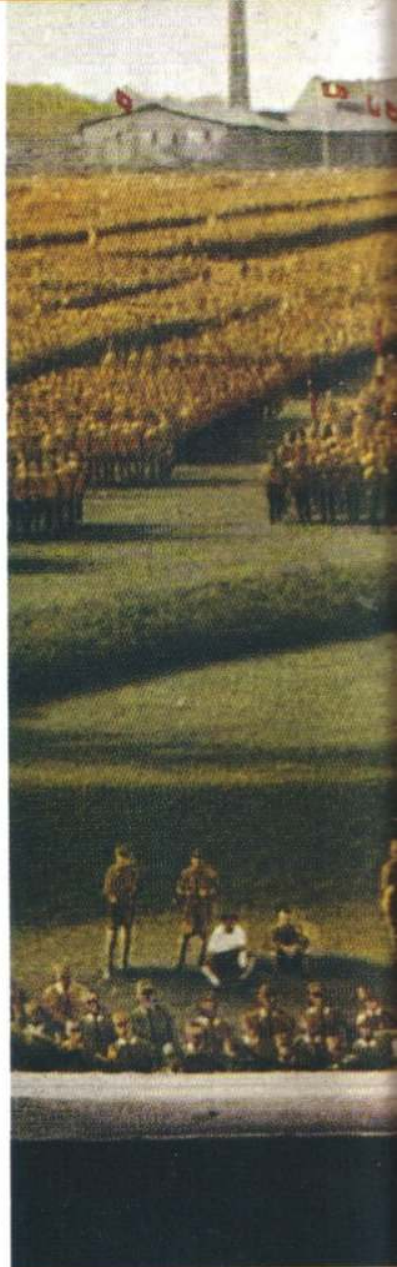
In 1922 the NSDAP created a youth section or *Jugendbund* for males aged between 14 and 18. This was further subdivided into two age groups, the older group – the *Jungsturm* Adolf Hitler – would later become the Hitler Youth.

The first foray outside Munich by the SA was on October 14-15,

1922 when Hitler took 800 stormtroopers to take part in a 'German Day' at Coburg. The running fights with Communists which followed became known as 'The Battle of Coburg', and attracted considerable national press coverage to the NSDAP.

The first national rally of the NSDAP came three months later when 6,000 SA men paraded before Hitler in Munich. At this stage, the organisation did not wear the khaki brown shirt and breeches that would become its hallmark. The uniforms consisted of a peaked ski cap, white shirt and black tie, tunic jacket and riding boots or boots and puttees. Jacket, cap and breeches were grey or field grey, and were often the wearer's wartime uniform. A swastika armband worn on the left upper arm would remain a distinguishing feature.

On March 1, 1923, command of the SA passed from Klitzsch, whose first loyalty was to Captain Ehrhardt, to Hitler's chosen commander Captain Hermann Goering. Goering enjoyed a high public profile as a former fighter ace and holder of the *Pour le Mérite*, Imperial Germany's highest award for gallantry. Potentially immensely capable, he was also lazy and self-indulgent. The driving force for the SA was Ernst Röhm, a staff officer at the Army HQ in







*Above: Adolf Hitler contemplates a sea of brown as the SA gathers at Dusseldorf to celebrate the Nazi seizure of power in 1933.*

*Right: In its earliest incarnation the SA consisted primarily of former soldiers. They were the party's streetfighters and shock troops, who paraded in the uniforms they had worn in the trenches of World War I.*



*Left: When Hitler came to power, the SA had grown beyond all recognition, gaining massive support during the Depression. These swastika banners on parade at Nuremberg were symbols of a powerful force numbered by the millions.*





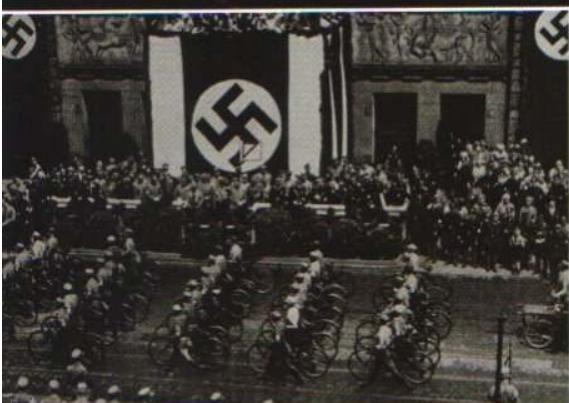


*Left: Nazis gather at Coburg in October 1922. This was one of the Party's first displays of strength outside its Munich heartland: Adolf Hitler took 800 stormtroopers to the city, where they paraded in spite of being requested not to, and in the ensuing riot cleared the streets of all political opponents.*

*Below: In the early 1930s political violence was out of control, and the SA and paramilitary uniforms were banned. The Stormtroopers simply took off their tunics and paraded in white shirts.*



*Below: An SA honour guard stands in front of the Führer as he addresses a meeting. By this time, the real Party security was in the hands of the SS: nominally part of the SA, but in practice an increasingly independent group.*



*Above: Brownshirts parade in the early 1930s. Many of the SA's members wanted their organisation to replace the regular German Army – a possibility which alarmed many of the Nazi Party's less militant supporters.*





Munich. He managed to persuade the Army to supply the SA with small arms which gave it the status of a *Wehrverbände*, an officially tolerated 'Armed Group'.

The combination of a famous leader and a good organiser attracted more recruits to the SA, and by September 1923 Hitler had 70,000 men under his command. Most of the *Kampfbund* or Fighting Union were SA members, but there were also allies from other right wing paramilitary groups, including the *Bund Oberland* and the *Reichsflagge*. It was with these that, in November 1923, the Nazis attempted to seize power in Munich – the 'Beer Hall Putsch'. The putsch failed, Adolf Hitler was to lead to the arrested and imprisoned, and the SA was banned.

However, the violence had attracted the attention of like-minded people all over Germany, and as former SA members scattered through the country, they set up clandestine groups called *Frontbann*.

## SA BORN AGAIN

The SA was re-activated in February 1925, though it was much smaller and its members were forbidden to bear arms. It was nevertheless a significant year, since it was then that the SA adopted the distinctive brown uniform that earned the nickname 'Brownshirts'. The original uniforms were made from surplus Imperial German Army tropical material destined for use in German colonies in Africa. Gerhard Rossbach, an SA officer who had found the material in Austria, was able to buy at bargain basement prices. A year after the uniform was adopted, new rank insignia was authorised, based on collar patches with a system of stars to show seniority.

1925 also saw the founding of another Nazi organisation. There had been small protection squads within the larger SA since 1923, but in 1925 these became the *Schutzstaffel*, or SS. They were

distinguished from the mainstream SA by their black caps and *Totenkopf* badges. Four years later Heinrich Himmler became *Reichsführer* of a 280-strong SS, and a year later, with a strength of 400, the SS became an independent force within the SA. It also adopted an all-black uniform.

## CHIEF OF STAFF

The day-to-day operations of the SA were the responsibility of the Chief of Staff, Captain Franz Felix Pfeffer von Salomon. Possibly because Salomon sounded unfashionably Jewish, he called himself Franz Pfeffer, or Franz von Pfeffer. A Prussian and a former soldier, he had commanded his own *Freikorps* after the war, and had found his way to the NSDAP by 1925. Pfeffer was an undistinguished, unimaginative little man, but he was nevertheless a strict disciplinarian and a capable organiser who gave the SA its paramilitary structure.

The smallest unit was a *Schar* or 'band' of between three and 12 men. Units progressing through *Truppe* - platoon, *Sturme* - company, *Standarte* - regiment, *Brigade* - brigade and finally *Gausturme* - division.

But as the SA grew more military, it caused a split in the leadership. Hitler saw the SA as the street muscle for the party, which could break up rival meetings and protect those of the Nazis. Röhm had grander ambitions, seeing the SA as a broadly based citizens' force which would form the basis for the new German army which was being planned in secret. The clash was so bitter that Röhm resigned from the Party in April, and in 1928 left the country to take up a position as a military adviser in Bolivia.

He left an organisation once more growing rapidly. In August 1927 there were 30,000 men in the SA, and by 1929 the figure stood at around 60,000. Pfeffer added orderliness, traditional army drill and military bands to SA formations, giving a parade-

# POLITICAL TERROR

Intimidation and violence on the streets



Above: Violence on German streets started almost as soon as the last shots of World War I were fired, and it quickly polarised into a left-right conflict. These right-wing *Freikorps* members seen in Berlin in 1919 are typical of the ex-servicemen who formed the bulk of the early SA.

Right: Hamburg, in the summer of 1932, and uniformed Police stop and search a cyclist for weapons. This was at the height of the violence which preceded Hitler's appointment as Chancellor and the Nazi seizure of power.



Below: Reichstag election, Berlin, 1930. Passers-by tend to a woman badly injured by a gang of Nazis. She was not a target: she had simply got in the way as they launched an attack on a Communist group.







*Above: The violent nature of the political process in Germany was often fatal. The SA and the Nazis used such deaths to create martyrs for the cause, which featured heavily in the propaganda of the time.*

*Left: The SA grew explosively in the year following Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, and it began to take on an even more overtly military appearance. These are mobile SA troops marching past Hitler at Nuremberg.*

*Below: Once in power, Hitler no longer needed an army of street thugs. But disbanding or changing the SA was going to be a problem. Central to that problem was dealing with its brutish yet highly capable leader, Ernst Röhm.*

ground bravura and military panache to the organisation. His object was to make the SA an instrument of propaganda rather than a gang of street fighters. The mass parades by the SA were his creation, as was the raised arm salute and the chants of 'Heil Hitler' and 'Sieg Heil'.

## ALL KINDS OF RECRUITS

The SA attracted many men who were unemployed and who saw the organisation as a way into work as soldiers in the all-professional Reichswehr. But not all were poor. One of the more exalted recruits was August Wilhelm Heinrich Gunther Prinz von Preussen, the fourth of six sons born to Kaiser Wilhelm II. After service in World War I, the prince joined the Nazi party in 1929. In 1933 he was elected to the Reichstag, representing Potsdam. He rose through the

officer ranks of the SA, becoming *Obergruppenführer* in 1943.

The withdrawal of Röhm had not healed the cracks within the SA and the party. Pfeffer's deputy in eastern Germany was Walter Stennes. In September 1930 his men - many of whom were unemployed and impoverished - heckled a speech by the Gauleiter of Berlin - one Josef Goebbels - and beat up his SS guards.

It was not an isolated incident, as the SA demanded a greater say in the running of the Nazi Party. In particular they insisted on the nomination of SA men as Party candidates in the Reichstag elections. Hitler replaced Pfeffer and took personal charge of the SA, flying to Berlin and restoring order after addressing the mutinous SA men in meeting after meeting. But the SA revolt was far from over: in the spring of 1931, Stennes held secret







# Horst Wessel

## The Song, not the Singer

meetings with SA leaders and called for the replacement of Hitler. However they lacked support: their revolt failed and they were dismissed from the Party. Goering took over the Berlin organisation with SS men.

### RÖHM RETURNS

To restore confidence within the SA and ensure its loyalty, Hitler telegraphed Röhm in Bolivia, asking him to return and take command. Pfeffer was sacked partly because of the Stennes rebellion but also because he favoured a closer link with the Army. Pfeffer's dismissal meant that he survived the Röhm purge in 1934, and only re-emerged from obscurity in 1944 to take command of a Volkssturm (Home Guard) unit on the quiet Swiss border.

On 5 January 1931, Röhm became SA Chief of Staff, and immediately began a programme of expansion. In October of that year, in a 'token mobilisation', the Nazis were able to concentrate 104,000 uniformed men in the town of Brunswick. The display of strength so startled the Weimar authorities that in December they imposed a ban on the wearing of all political uniforms. This proscription remained in place until June 1932 but had little effect, since the Nazis adopted the civilian 'uniform' of a white shirt and black tie which effectively distinguished them on the streets.

By March 1932 the SA was back in uniform and its strength stood at 400,000. It was a potent political tool which Hitler was to use to great effect as he embarked on the final year of his road to power in March 1933. But it was a dangerous tool, with a mind of its own, and the Führer would repay its support and loyalty with the blood of its leaders.

The death of a young SA leader named Horst Wessel in February 1930 gave the Nazis and the SA a martyr and a song. According to Josef Goebbels, Wessels died heroically after being seriously wounded in a street fight with Communists. Before he died, Wessel had written a catchy song – the tune reputedly adapted from a Salvation Army hymn – which had been published in *Die Angriff*, Berlin's Nazi newspaper. Goebbels elevated the march to the status of a second national anthem, and Horst Wessel became a national hero.

The truth was somewhat different. Wessel was born in Bielefeld in 1907, the son of a well-respected protestant pastor. In the late 1920s, much to the dismay of his widowed mother, he gave up his law studies at the University of Berlin to become an SA stormtrooper. He quickly became known as a handy man to have on your side in a brawl.

Horst Wessel was indeed killed by a communist, but it was not in a street battle. He had become involved with a prostitute, and her former pimp – a member of the Red Front – broke into his apartment with some friends and shot the SA man in the mouth. Mortally injured, Wessel lingered for several days in a hospital bed before finally succumbing to his wound.



Above: Horst Wessel marches at the head of his Stormtroopers, having little idea that he will soon become a Nazi 'saint'.

### Horst Wessel Lied

Die Fahne hoch, die Reihen fest geschlossen  
SA marschier mit ruhig festem Schritt  
Kam'raden die Rotfront und Reaktion erschossen  
Marschier'n im Geist in ndern Reihen mit.

Die Strasse frei den braunen Bataillonen  
Die Strasse frei dem Sturmabteilungsmann  
Es schau'n auf's Hakenkreuz voll Hoffnung schon Millionen  
Der Tag für Freiheit und für Brot bricht an

Zum letzten Mal wird nun Appell geblasen  
Zum Kampfe steh'n wir alle schon bereit  
Bald flettern Hitler-fahnen über allen Strassen  
Die Knechtschaft dauert nur mehr kurze Zeit

Die Fahne hoch die Reihen fest geschlossen  
SA marschier mit ruhig festem Schritt  
Kam'raden die Rotfront und Reaktion erschossen  
Marschier'n im Geist in ndern Reihen mit.

Raise high the flag! The ranks stand firm together!  
SA march on, with steady, determined pace.  
With comrades who, though shot by Red reactionaries,  
Still march with us, their spirits in our ranks.

The streets are clear for the brown battalions  
The streets are clear for the men of the SA  
Millions are full of hope at the sight of the Swastika  
The day for Bread and Freedom has dawned

For the last time the rally will be sounded  
We stand full ready for the fight  
Soon Hitler banners will fly over every street  
Our bondage will not last much longer

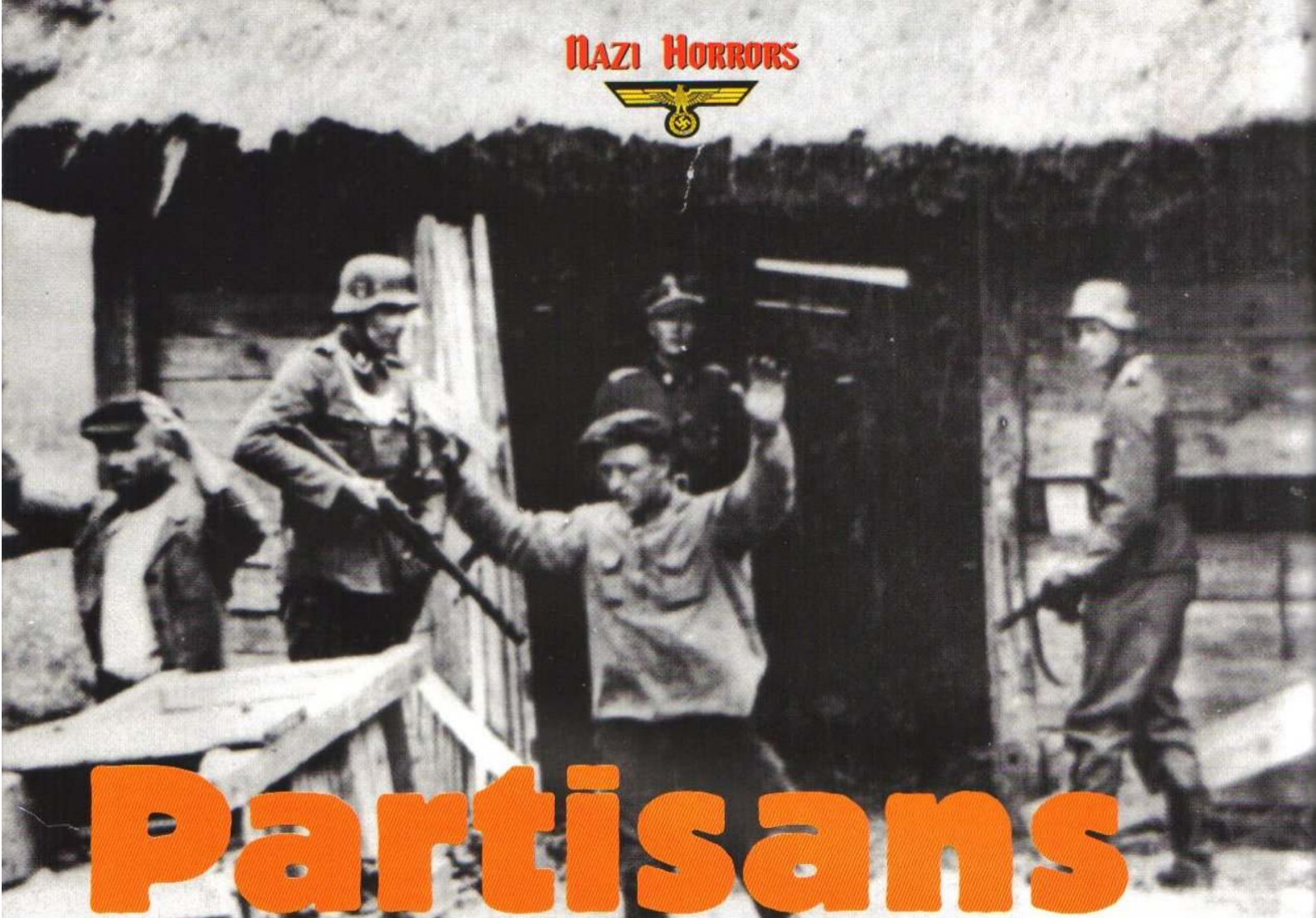
Raise high the flag! The ranks stand firm together!  
SA march on, with steady, determined pace.  
With Comrades who, though shot by Red reactionaries,  
Still march with us, their spirits in our ranks.

Right: The Luftwaffe named its 26th Zerstörer wing after Horst Wessel. It saw action on both the Eastern and Western fronts, as well as over the Mediterranean, as seen here.

Below: The Waffen SS named its 18th SS Panzergrenadier Division after Horst Wessel. Formed in 1944, it was manned largely by ethnic German Hungarian volunteers.







# Partisans

## War of atrocity on the Eastern Front

**B**EFORE HITLER unleashed his armies on the Soviet Union he made it plain that this was to be no ordinary war. A month before the invasion, OKW, his High Command, issued orders that soldiers were to shoot civilians attempting any resistance – or who they felt might be tempted to resist. In other words, they could shoot anyone they liked.

This was followed on 6 June by the notorious 'commissar order', which instructed troops that Soviet officials falling into German hands were to be executed immediately. In this way, the German army signalled its complete departure from the accepted conduct of war.

It was not the first time in recent history that the German

army invaded a country, determined to stamp out the least sign of resistance by the civilian population. But the very savagery calculated to cow the people into submission backfired. By 1943 even Himmler had to admit, "perhaps we have over-reacted to these bandits, and by this have caused ourselves endless problems".

Initial Soviet attempts to co-ordinate resistance behind German lines met with failure. Stalin had executed most of the Bolshevik 'old guard' whose

**"Terror is a useful form of military operation – it may even be essential"**

**Lenin, 1906**

mastery of lightning raids during the civil war might have been useful. Throughout the 1930s, the emphasis had been on conventional war, but just as the Red Army started to examine possible guerrilla strategies in 1937, Stalin arrested and shot most of its commanders.

### INVASION

When the German invasion finally came in June 1941, the Wehrmacht penetrated deep into the Soviet Union, leaving enormous numbers of Soviet military personnel isolated. Over 1.5 million men were taken prisoner in huge encirclements that summer, but tens of thousands escaped capture and melted away into the forests. Some continued the fight, emerging from their remote hideaways to blow up railways or attack road traffic. But

geography and history dictated their effectiveness. Across the open steppe of southern Russia and the Ukraine there was little cover, and guerrilla activity was minimal. In the Baltic states, annexed by Stalin in 1940 and subjected to a wave of arrests and deportations by the Soviet secret police, the Germans were welcomed as liberators; indeed, most guerrilla activity in the region was directed against the Red Army. In the Crimea, the Tartars helped the Germans hunt down local Communists. Only in the endless swamps of the Pripjat and the trackless forests of Belorussia did the partisans succeed in maintaining a precarious freedom.

In January 1942 there were probably no more than 30,000 partisans active across 850,000 square miles of territory. A year later things had changed



# WAR WITHOUT MERCY

The price of opposition to the Nazis



**Above:** Soviet partisans move through ripening corn. By the latter stages of the war, such raiders were tying down hundreds of thousands of German soldiers with their behind-the-lines actions.

**Left:** German military police round up partisan suspects in a Ukrainian village. The police battalions were among the most brutal of all German units.

dramatically. Their activities were directed by a central command in Moscow, supplies were being delivered regularly by aircraft, and the number of active fighters had swollen to more than 130,000. On German pilot maps, large swathes of Belorussia were marked in red: dangerous to land.

The credit for this startling rise in guerrilla activity goes, as Himmler observed, to the Germans themselves. German army retaliation for resistance activities was deliberately out of proportion to the trouble they caused. For example, in November 1941, the 454th security detachment reported shooting 400 villagers after guerrillas damaged a communications facility. The army burned down villages in the depth of the Russian winter and drove women and children into the snow to die. After attempts to secure labour voluntarily, the Germans resorted to mass deportations of young people to work as slaves in the Reich.

In the summer of 1942 the

increase in partisan activity prompted further German reaction. From August the SS officially dropped the term 'partisan' in its communications, using 'bandit' instead. In October Himmler appointed SS *Obergruppenführer* and *General der Polizei* Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski to co-ordinate the anti-partisan war in Russia. Nevertheless, the fearful attrition suffered by the German army on the battlefield severely restricted his options. By December 1942 OKW ordered all means to be used, "even against women and children".

## SECURITY FORCES

The German army entered Russia with nine security divisions, three per Army Group. Each consisted of three battalions of regular soldiers and another three of *landschütze*: mainly World War I veterans commanded by old reserve officers. It was a hopelessly inadequate force with which to hold down so vast a nation. For instance, late in 1941, the rear area of the German 9th army encompassed over 40,000 square miles of territory, including some 1,500 villages. The army could spare just 1,700 men for security duties, of which only 300 were free to conduct mobile operations, as opposed to guarding key points. German allies and locally recruited

The Germans certainly bit off more than they could chew when they took on the Soviet Union. The sheer size of the country was overwhelming, and the Russian winter had to be experienced to be believed. But what came as even more of a surprise was the stubborn resistance of Soviet peasants, the more so as German brutality alienated many who had initially seen them as liberators.

The land they occupied was no stranger to barbarity. The Russian civil war, which had been conducted with revolting cruelty on all sides, had ended less than 20 years before.

The partisans soon demonstrated that they had nothing to learn from the Nazis when it came to putting men and women to death. Neither side held prisoners for long: both killed their captives in ghastly ways in order to terrorise their enemies.

From a military perspective this was inefficient: knowing what was in store for them, Germans seldom surrendered to partisans and vice versa. But it did not matter. The cycle of atrocity and retaliatory atrocity continued until the end of the war, escalating horrifically in 1944.

The final brutality came when the Germans at last collapsed and retreated before the Red Army. Those who had sided with the Nazis were exposed to bloodthirsty vengeance.



**Above right:** Anyone considered to be a partisan received short shrift from the Germans. There was no due process of law: mere suspicion of 'banditry' was enough to see the victim hung from the nearest lamppost.

**Right:** Brutality went the other way, too. Any cut-off German soldiers could expect to be killed - especially if they were in the SS.







security units joined SS and SD formations in suppressing the partisans, but it remained the business of relative small numbers of people operating across enormous distances.

The initial resistance to the Germans had been spontaneous. Civilians, or soldiers cut-off from their units, had attacked small detachments of the enemy, or committed acts of sabotage. But the stunning success of the Soviet 1942-3 winter offensive changed everything. Stalin created a partisan headquarters, based in Moscow, and the scattered bands were brought together and sustained by an informal, if ruthless, system of conscription. Villages had to supply men and women to fight

**Below: A familiar sight on the Eastern front. A woman wails over the bodies of her relatives and neighbours, slaughtered by the SS in reprisal for a partisan raid.**

**"The necessity for conducting such warfare is beyond the comprehension of you generals, but I insist that my orders be followed without complaint. The commissars hold views directly opposite to those of National Socialism. Hence they must be eliminated."**

**Hitler's 'commissar order'**

in the partisan movement.

Once the Germans were on the defensive in the east, the partisan movement became a key instrument in re-establishing the Communist regime. NKVD teams were attached to the larger partisan bands, punishing faint-

hearts and traitors in their usual lethal fashion. The intention was to demonstrate that no former Soviet citizen, however far behind the lines, however well-connected with the Germans, was beyond the reach of Moscow.

Desertions were punished by reprisals against families or whole communities – it was not only the Germans who massacred villages. This was often as counter-productive as German terror: some preferred to face German captivity, with all that entailed, than Stalin's secret police. A few changed sides, volunteering for the formations recruited inside the USSR in defiance of Hitler's orders not to arm Soviet 'sub-humans'.

The Germans seem to have planned to control their conquered territories with ethnic Germans then living outside Germany, the *Volksdeutsche*. Thousands of German settlers

were to be brought east to create German colonies. However, demand exceeded supply and by mid-1942 the Germans employed 48,000 former Soviet citizens in a locally-recruited security force, the *Schutzmannschaft*.

## LOCAL ASSISTANTS

Divided into *Wachtbattalion* which had mainly static duties, guarding road and rail junctions, and *Frontbattalion* that went out on anti-partisan operations, their knowledge of the language and terrain were obviously useful. But the use was tempered by the ever-present threat of treachery – the NKVD worked overtime to introduce double-agents into these units. By the same token, the Germans recruited informers and tried to 'turn' partisans to their side. Russian-speaking Germans also served as 'counter guerrillas', infiltrating the real partisans at terrible risk to their





own lives if discovered.

By mid-1943 there were 150,000 renegade Soviet personnel serving in German army *Ostruppen* battalions – many in the front line, others in action against the partisans. But Hitler intervened, ordering them to be split up. Some were sent to France and others to Italy, triggering a wave of desertions.

The belated attempt to foster an anti-Communist Russian army was also doomed to failure. Although Andrei Vlasov, a Soviet general captured in 1942, had voiced anti-Communist sentiments and clearly wished to be the focus of a pro-German movement, it was not until November 1944 that Hitler agreed to establish the 'Committee for the Liberation of the Russian Peoples'. By that time the war was already lost, the German empire in the east reduced to a shrunken enclave on the Baltic coast.

### THREE-WAY WAR

There were persistent Soviet attempts to introduce partisans to the Ukraine, but the lack of air cover betrayed them, as did the local people on many occasions. There was a guerrilla movement in the Ukraine, but it was hostile to both the Nazis and the Russians. In 1944 a three-way fight took place as the German army was driven back from Kiev. The Ukrainian nationalists ambushed and killed one of Stalin's top commanders, Marshal Vatutin, and continued armed resistance to the Soviet regime well into the 1950s.

During 1942-3 the Germans probed at the edges of the guerrilla strongholds in Belorussia. But analysis of their operations expose them for what they were: 'ethnic cleansing' rather than battles with military forces. Anti-partisan sweeps tended to produce several thousand dead 'bandits' at tiny, if any, cost to the Germans. A bodycount of 6,000 guerrillas might only yield a few hundred captured rifles.

Even Wilhelm Kube, the Nazi

*Generalkommissar* in White Russia, derided these operations as mere massacres of innocents. He argued that they were counter-productive and would only generate more resistance. On 22 September 1943 he was proved right – one of his locally-recruited maids put a bomb under his bed.

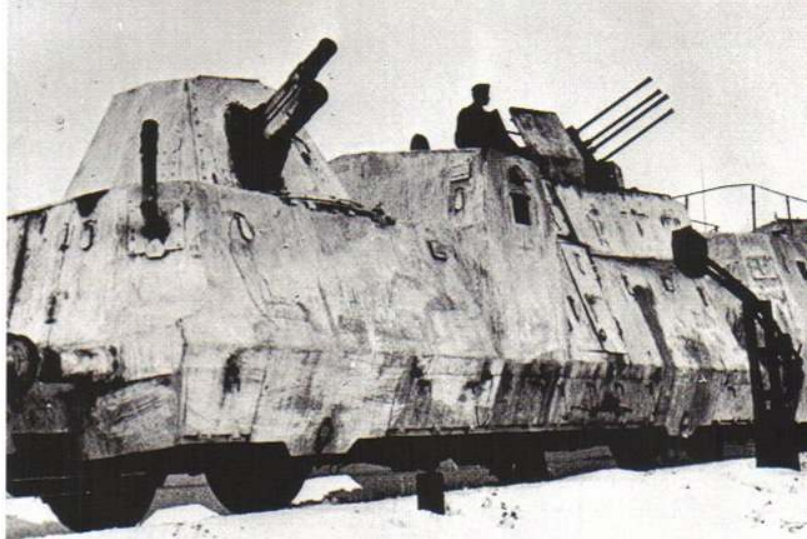
### 'ETHNIC CLEANSING'

Early in 1944 the Germans decided to crush the Belorussian partisan movement once and for all. But the German forces were second-line units equipped with light scales of weapons – French tanks captured in 1940 provided the armour, much of the artillery dated from 1918, and air support was limited. The partisans, by contrast, were well-supplied from the air and their units bristled with modern automatic weapons.

The Germans won, in the sense that they planted the swastika flag everywhere they attacked, killing thousands of people in the process. But the capture of giant tracts of swamp and wilderness availed them nothing, and their own units suffered serious losses.

On the eve of the great Soviet offensive launched on 22 June 1944, the partisans struck back. German communications were completely disrupted behind Army Group Centre – lines were blown up, trains derailed and their occupants slaughtered.

As the Red Army swept westward, the partisans were absorbed into the front line units. The Soviets were not fussy about physical standards, but 20 per cent of the former partisans were invalided out, many with tuberculosis. Those soldiers among them who had evaded capture in 1941 now had to explain to the NKVD how they had been separated from their units in the first place. Thousands who failed to give satisfactory answers now found themselves consigned to penal battalions, or vanished into the Gulag.



*Above: Russian roads were primitive, which made rail lines vital in the support of the German invaders, and key targets for the partisans. As a defensive measure, the Germans deployed heavily armed armoured trains.*



*Left: Captured partisans are executed by German army officers. All arms and services were guilty of atrocities in the East.*

*Below: There were no innocents in the partisan war. This boy was caught with a pigeon in his possession – which made him a suspected partisan – and he was shot by the SS.*







**A**T THE AGE OF 36 when the Nazi Party came to power, Joseph Goebbels was the youngest member of Hitler's cabinet.

Probably the most intelligent of Hitler's followers, and certainly the most articulate, Goebbels saw early that there was no way Germany could win the war – yet even so, he followed his leader down into the darkness.

Strasser's damning assessment was not wide of the mark. Goebbels was as 'rudely stamp'd' as Shakespeare's Richard III. Little more than five feet tall, childhood osteomyelitis had paralysed and deformed his right foot. It left him hobbling after his mocking classmates, determined to wreak evil on the world that mocked him. 'Hatred, that's my trade,' he once boasted in an aside that could have come from the murderous hunchback, 'it takes you a long way farther than any other emotion.'

## CRUEL DEFORMITY

In Shakespeare's age it was widely believed that an external deformity such as a hunchback or clubfoot was divine punishment for internal corruption. This cruel superstition survived into the

# Goebbels

## "SATAN IN HUMAN FORM"

twentieth century, and it was still current in the Rhineland town of Rheydt where Paul Joseph Goebbels was born on 29 October 1897.

Goebbels was acutely conscious of his deformity, and it certainly spurred him on to achieve academic success despite his humble origins. From 1921 he was always 'Herr Doctor' Goebbels, obtaining a Ph.D. after four years of arduous study on a minimal income. His father was a shop floor worker in a factory, who worked his way up to become a book-keeper and eventually plant manager.

At school, and even more so at university, Goebbels met daily reminders of his lower class background. Only his precocious intelligence sustained him. He passed top of his class when he took the *Abitur* or school leaving examination in 1917, qualifying him to go to university. Selected to give his year's valedictory

address, he delivered a finely-crafted patriotic oration.

Goebbels' silver tongue brought him success in another quarter. Studying at a succession of universities, he dated women far out of his social and economic league: a recipe for heartbreak if there ever was one. Jilted by a wealthy girlfriend in the summer of 1920 he suffered a nervous breakdown. In later years he would describe his compulsive philandering as 'the revenge of the betrayed'.

The limping Goebbels was unfit for military service, a burning humiliation for an intensely patriotic young man. He was condemned to stay at home while school friends and his brothers, Konrad and Hans, went to fight in World War I. Goebbels' brothers survived, although Hans was captured by the French, but his 13-year old sister Elisabeth had died of TB during the winter of 1914-15.

Goebbels completed his studies despite the civil unrest that followed Germany's defeat, and his doctorate gave him a better choice of career than his father ever had. Yet like many of the leading Nazis, Goebbels never managed to hold down a job. He briefly played the role of the commuter, travelling to an administrative job in a bank for some six months before resigning in disgust. After a humiliating interlude in which he pretended to his family that he was still employed, his tentative involvement in fringe politics won him the role of managing editor of the *Völkische Freiheit*, a cheap, right-wing weekly.

## BECOMING A NAZI

He joined the Nazi Party in 1924, becoming business manager of a National Socialist group in the Rhineland. At that time opposed to the Munich-based section of the Party, Goebbels fell in with Hitler's rival Gregor Strasser, who was building a power base in the industrial north and centre of Germany.

Goebbels' life was transformed in 1926 when he met Hitler face-to-face. The Party Leader set out to win over the talented little cripple to his cause, and Goebbels became yet another opponent who

# THE MAN WHO HATED JEWS

## Rabble-rouser of the Third Reich

**L**ike Hitler, Goebbels' unrelenting anti-Semitism seems to date from the grim days of 1919-20; it was a hatred of Jews that surpassed the prevalent anti-Semitism of the era, a pathological loathing that defies rational analysis. Goebbels was a prime mover in the development of the 'final solution'. It was his idea that Jews were made to wear the Star of David, and his initiative to introduce discriminatory measures such as reduced rations and being barred from public transport. He was so determined to make Berlin 'Jew free' that in 1943 he sent SS squads to raid munitions factories at dawn, seizing a number of Jewish forced labourers and despatching them to Auschwitz.

*Joseph Goebbels was originally suspicious of Hitler, but like so many of the otherwise intelligent and strong-willed members of the Nazi leadership, he fell completely under the Führer's spell.*







*Above: Joseph Goebbels addresses a public meeting in Berlin. A superb speaker, who put forward his arguments with lucidity and clarity, he was the antithesis of his rabble-rousing Führer.*

succumbed to Hitler's personal magnetism. Goebbels' diary entries initially describe Hitler in vaguely hostile terms, but gradually change in a rapidly escalating mood of sycophancy, verging on homo-eroticism.

Goebbels' feelings were not reciprocated. Hitler recognised Goebbels' abilities and exploited them, but he seldom extended his confidence to Goebbels the same way he did to Goering, Hess and later Bormann.

Goebbels would be at Hitler's side during the 'Night of the Long Knives', but he was not informed of what was about to take place until the last moment.

It was, of course, Hitler's instinctive policy to keep even his closest followers at each others' throats, so that they would be too busy plotting against each other to plot against him. Goebbels certainly devoted a great deal of his energies to intriguing against opponents in the leadership such as Rosenberg, Ribbentrop and, at the end of the war, Martin Bormann.

Hitler used Goebbels to break the Strasser brothers' grip on the Berlin branch of the Nazi Party.

*Right: Although he was the most intelligent of Hitler's Henchmen, Joseph Goebbels lacked the powerbase within the party of rivals like Goering, Himmler and Bormann.*

**"Germany is in the hands of an Austrian who is a congenital liar; a former officer who is a pervert; and a clubfoot. And I tell you the last is the worst of them all. This is Satan in human form."**

**Gregor Strasser, December 1932**



# HITLER'S HENCHMEN



Its independence from the Munich-based leadership, and alarmingly socialist leanings threatened to divide the NSDAP permanently. Initially Gregor Strasser's man, Goebbels changed sides and eventually led the re-organised Berlin party in a high profile campaign against the Communists. By staging Nazi rallies in the heart of the Red-dominated working class districts of Berlin, Goebbels brought about a series of street fights in which the SA usually emerged triumphant. When the enraged Communists assassinated the young SA leader Horst Wessel, Goebbels had a propaganda field day, quite probably conniving at the Communists' subsequent attack on the funeral cortege.

Goebbels played another public role in the Nazi regime: he and his wife Magda were the 'first family' of the Reich. Magda was the very vision of Nazi womanhood—a tall, blonde baby-machine. Goebbels met her in 1930: she was 28, and in the process of divorcing an industrialist 20 years her senior



*Below: Hitler had no children, but the family was an important part of the Nazi philosophy. Goebbels, however, had an attractive wife and six charming children, so they became the 'First Family' of the Third Reich.*

*Above: Goebbels was the only senior Party leader who bothered to visit German cities devastated by Allied bombing.*

*Top: Goebbels was appointed to the Propaganda Ministry in 1933, and straightaway set about reinventing the Nazi Party's image. He used every means possible, from manipulation of the media to outright lies.*



whom she had married shortly after leaving convent school. They married in December 1931. Hitler was one of the two witnesses, and the union between this unlikely couple was immediately blessed: Helga was born nine months later, the first of their six children.

## MAGDA AND HITLER

Magda fell under Hitler's spell, though in her case the feeling was explicitly sexual: Bormann joked about it, and Albert Speer recognised that her devotion to the Führer spelt doom for her children in 1945.

Goebbels was the only senior Nazi seen in public after British and American heavy bombers had attacked Berlin: he would be out inspecting the damage, helping co-ordinate rescue efforts for people trapped in the rubble – and winning the grudging respect of the same working class districts he had attacked in the 1930s.

Shrewd enough to recognise Germany's likely fate – in the summer of 1943 he confided to his diary that the war was lost – Goebbels remained under Hitler's spell. An early advocate of 'total war', he helped Speer maximise German industrial output, yet prepared to go down with his Führer if it failed.

As the war in the east went from triumph to disaster, he conjured up fearsome images of the Red hordes marching west 'with Jewish liquidation squads' in their wake.

In April 1945 he joined Hitler in the Berlin bunker, bringing his family with him. Magda broke down completely, screaming and sobbing at the door when Hitler committed suicide on 30 April. Goebbels' final, irrelevant triumph was to be appointed Hitler's successor, Chancellor of Germany. He held the office for just 24 hours: on the night of 30 April/1 May, Magda murdered all their children, then joined her husband outside the bunker entrance where she swallowed cyanide and he blew out his brains with a pistol.



# Propaganda Master

The first 'Spin Doctor', who stood truth on its head

**E**lected to the Reichstag in 1928 as one of 12 Nazi members, Goebbels doubled as leader of the Berlin party and national publicity co-ordinator. His public speeches were as fiery as Hitler's, and he toured Germany with them during the election campaigns of 1931-2. Goebbels pioneered many of the features of modern politics: it was his idea to organise whirlwind tours by air, sending Hitler to speak in town after town. He had Hitler's speeches recorded on 'singles' and distributed to families that owned a record-player. He recruited film makers to produce stunning propaganda movies of which Leni Riefenstahl's 'Triumph of the Will' is the most famous.

Goebbels' wartime propaganda was brilliant, in its own sinister way, and by no means the mere hysterical ranting he has often been credited with. Broadcasts and newspapers moulded public opinion, and discreet soundings were taken across the country to determine the genuine state of the people's mind. A born 'spin doctor', Goebbels turned truth on its head so convincingly it was hard to tell up from down. He was also the first to use the phrase 'Iron Curtain'

with reference to the Soviet Union's grip on eastern Europe, in a 1943 edition of *Das Reich*.

As minister for propaganda, Goebbels extended his empire to include the German film industry. Overseeing film production and doubling as State Censor, his influence was all-powerful and his casting couch the first stop on the career of many a starlet. It might be thought that with Goebbels' appearance, blackmail and coercion were the only ways to lure young women into bed. But like many unprepossessing men, Goebbels found his sex life transformed by political office. His affairs cumulated in a passionate relationship with a famous Czech actress Lida Baarova.

Magda, still dutifully delivering more children to her priapic dwarf of a husband, became so dejected she threatened to leave him. She dallied with other men, and secured the dog-like attentions of one of Goebbels' own aides. Suddenly, the Reich's first family was the stuff of soap opera. Hitler squashed Goebbels' fantasy of some sort of ménage à trois. Baarova was dumped and the unhappy propaganda chief dragged into reconciliation with Magda.



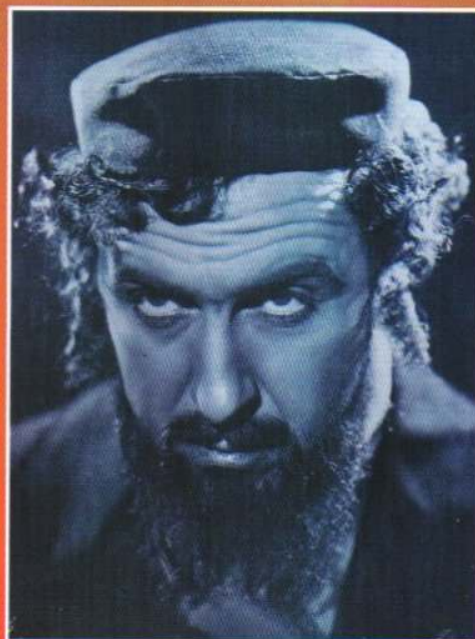
Above: As long as Czech actress Lida Baarova was Goebbels' mistress, her career was boosted by his ministry. However, Goebbels was forced to break off the liaison by Hitler, and her career disappeared into thin air.



Above: Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry made extremely effective use of graphic design, creating a heroic image for Nazi organisations like the SA, the SS and the Hitler Youth.



Above: The 1944 film 'Kolberg', based on events in a Prussian town which refused to surrender to Napoleon in 1805, was designed to create a 'Dunkirk' spirit in the German people. With the Russians pounding on Germany's borders, Goebbels withdrew 10,000 troops from combat to use as extras.



Left: 'Jud Süß', produced in 1940, depicted stereotypical Jews as evil, grasping villains, with lecherous intent on good German women. Violently anti-Semitic, it incited race hatred in impressionable young Germans.





# Battle of Britain

**It was the world's first purely aerial conflict, and the Luftwaffe's inability to destroy the Royal Air Force would ultimately cost Germany the war.**

**F**RANCE, to most Germans, was the most vindictive of the victorious powers of 1918, and the French collapse in June 1940 gave Hitler and his Wehrmacht the victory they most desired. However Britain, now led by Winston Churchill, adamantly refused to accept that she too had lost the war.

Hitler and the German high command knew that it was essential to keep the UK under pressure, initially from the air and then by the threat of a seaborne invasion. On July 16, the Führer issued Directive 16, ordering that plans for 'Operation Sealion' be prepared. Directive 16 stated that "a landing against

England (is) to be prepared and, if necessary carried out". Landings were to be made along the south coast and work began converting large river barges into landing craft.

There was a problem, however. Any invasion forces trying to cross the channel would be at the mercy of the Royal Navy. The first step in dealing with British sea power would be to win air superiority, so the Luftwaffe was tasked with neutralising the RAF. If the RAF could be eliminated, the Luftwaffe could, along with the Kriegsmarine, hold back the Royal Navy long enough for the German ground forces to be ferried across the Channel.

The German air attacks which Churchill was to call the Battle of

Britain did not begin officially for the Luftwaffe until *Adlertag* – Eagle Day – on August 13, 1940. However as early as June 30, Goering issued 'General Directions for the Operation of the Luftwaffe against England'. It defined the primary targets as the Royal Air Force, its airfields and the industries that supported it. On July 11 the *Reichmarschall* announced that convoys in the Channel were a legitimate target, and the Luftwaffe went into action.

## STUKAS SLAUGHTERED

However, as the German bombers tried to interdict British shipping, the RAF attacked the bombers, with the previously all-conquering Stuka especially proving vulnerable. A BBC

reporter on the south coast witnessed one of the daylight actions and broadcast a breathless account which was afterwards described as "sounding too much like a cricket commentary".

In June and July, the Luftwaffe launched small-scale raids from bases in the occupied territories of northern France, Belgium and Holland and Scandinavia. These reduced the distance over which the Luftwaffe was to attack, but at the same time the raids allowed the RAF to test their defences before the bigger raids which would inevitably come. What emerged, and was to be confirmed later, was that although the Luftwaffe had the advantage in numbers, the RAF

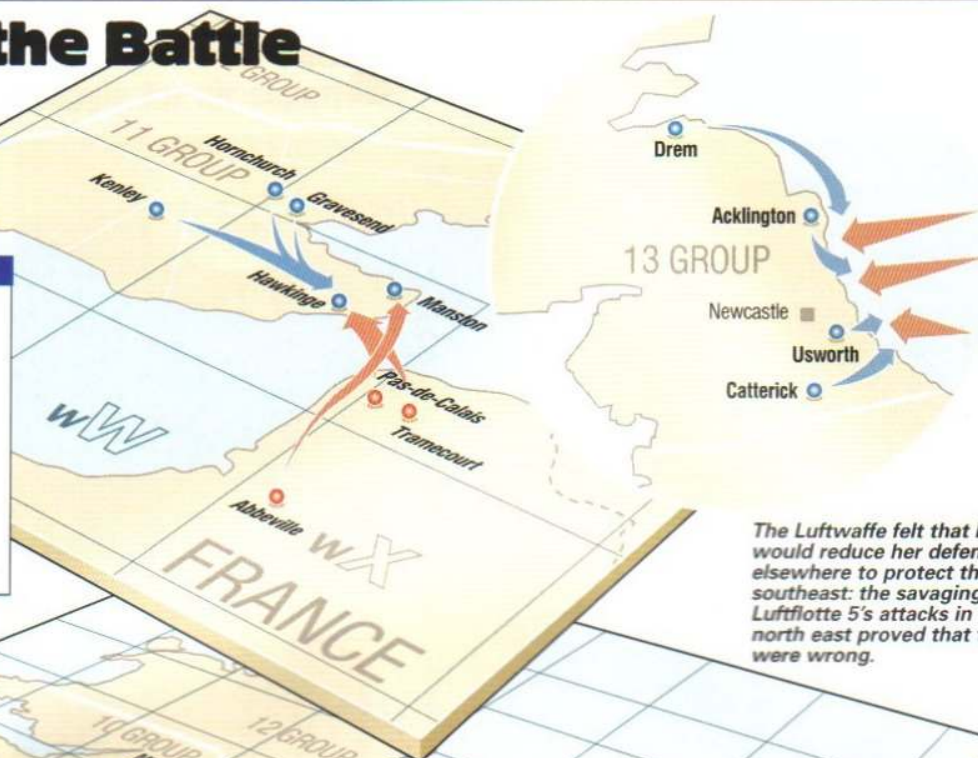


# Height of the Battle

August 15, 1940

## LATE MORNING

As the weather cleared on 15 August, a force of Stukas attacked RAF bases on the Kent coast, inflicting fairly serious damage at Lympne and rather less at Hawkinge. At the same time, 169 bombers from Luftflotte 5 arrived over the east coast of England. Flying from Aalborg in Denmark and Stavanger in Norway, they were escorted by Messerschmitt Bf 110 fighters. These were no match for the Hurricanes and Spitfires of 12 and 13 Group, and 16 bombers and seven Bf 110s were shot down. Without adequate fighter protection, Luftflotte 5 was to play little further part in the battle.



The Luftwaffe felt that Britain would reduce her defences elsewhere to protect the southeast: the savaging of Luftflotte 5's attacks in the north east proved that they were wrong.

## AFTERNOON / EARLY EVENING

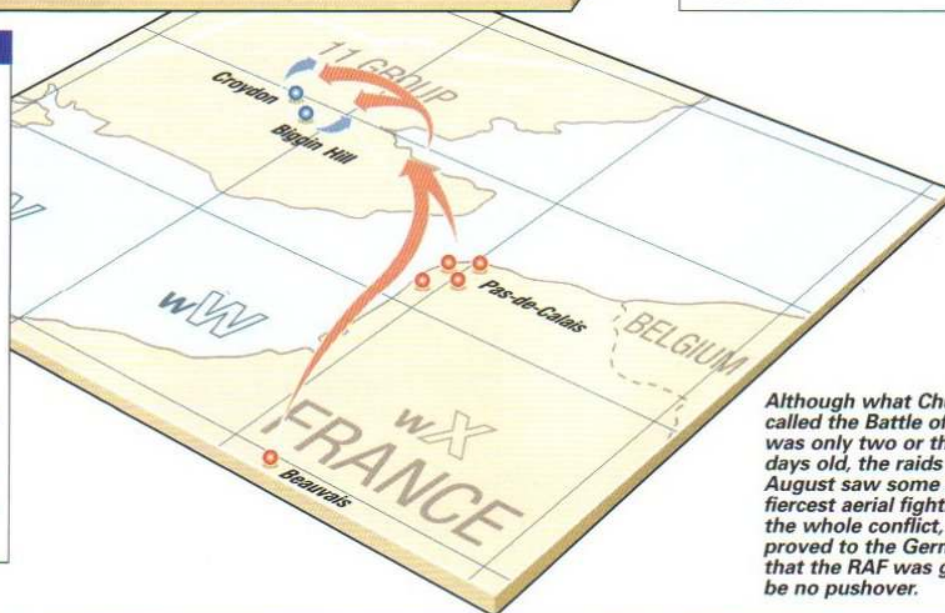
At around 15.00 hours a fast raid by fighter bombers against Martlesham Heath in Essex caught the British defences by surprise. Soon afterwards a large force of Dornier Do 17s struck at Eastchurch and Rochester, doing considerable damage to the Shorts aircraft factory (which drastically affected deliveries of the Short Stirling heavy bomber for several months). By around 17.00 hours further raids were being launched in the west: around 60 Ju 88s struck at the RAF bases of Middle Wallop and Worthy Down, while a heavy Stuka raid was launched against Portland. This small port was targeted by more raids in 1940 than any target other than London and Liverpool. The reason was simple: German planners considered that had the invasion gone ahead, Portland would have been a key port from which the Royal Navy would have attacked the Kriegsmarine's invasion fleet.

## EVENING

The last attacks of the day saw the same fighter-bombers which had attacked the Essex coast three hours before returning, but this time targeted on the RAF base at Kenley – a sector control station. The Bf 110s attacked with great effect, dropping bombs onto the airport's buildings and strafing with their cannon and machine guns. However, they had in fact missed Kenley and struck at Croydon – also an important fighter base, but not as important a link in the RAF's control system. And it was not without cost: defending Hurricanes downed the Gruppe commander and most of his staff flight.

At the same time, in what was supposed to be a co-ordinated attack, a force of some 80 Dorniers escorted by Messerschmitt Bf 109s headed towards the major base of Biggin Hill. However these too hit the wrong target, striking the new and still only partially operational airfield of West Malling.

If Luftwaffe crews did not know they were in a serious fight, then the events of 'Black Thursday' convinced them. The British lost 34 fighters that day, but 75 German aircraft did not return to their bases.



Although what Churchill called the Battle of Britain was only two or three days old, the raids of 15 August saw some of the fiercest aerial fighting of the whole conflict, and proved to the Germans that the RAF was going to be no pushover.





*Above: A flight of Messerschmitt Bf 109s heads across the English Channel. The relatively short range of the 109 was a serious handicap to the Luftwaffe, limiting the number of targets which escorted bombers could attack.*

had some advantages as well.

On July 19 Hitler directed a speech in the Reichstag at Britain. Dubbed 'The Last Appeal to Reason', he said, "If we do pursue the struggle, it will end with the complete destruction of one of the two combatants. Mr Churchill may believe that it will be Germany. I know it will be England". The speech was translated and dropped as leaflets over Britain.

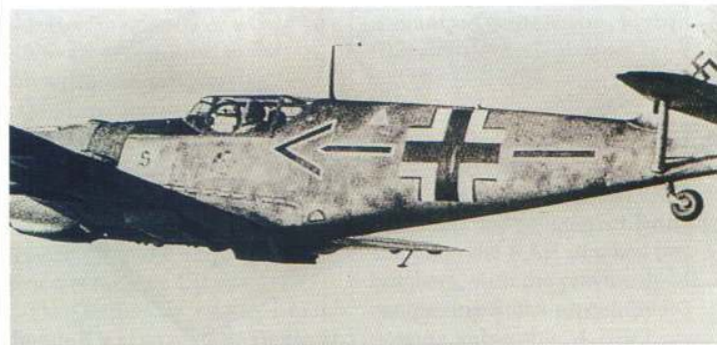
Since there was no positive political response from the British government, the orders were given to launch Eagle Day on 13 August, though the first heavy attacks began the day before, on 12 August. Among the targets was the important radar station at Ventnor on the Isle of

Wight, which was put out of action. On the 13th the weather was poor and, though some squadrons took off, it was not the planned mass assault.

It was not until the 15th that the three *Luftflotten* attacked in concert, putting 2,000 aircraft over Britain, with raids of between 100 and 150 aircraft crossing the Channel all through the afternoon.

During the air operations both the RAF and the Luftwaffe overestimated their victories –

understandable in the confusion of a dogfight, when two pilots attacking from different sides might both claim the same aircraft as a 'kill.' The huge figures of enemy losses were undoubtedly good for morale, but were not the basis for sound planning. Similarly, bomb damage to airfields, which could look spectacular in aerial photographs, was often relatively superficial. Luftwaffe planners took such intelligence at face value, however, and thought that



the RAF had been hurt more than in fact it was. Luftwaffe commanders now believed that the RAF had only 300 front line aircraft, and they decided to go all-out to destroy Fighter Command once and for all.

Small groups of bombers flew to Britain as bait to draw up the RAF fighters. As Spitfires, Hurricanes and Bf 109s tangled across the summer skies, more bombers slipped through, hitting key targets including airfields at Biggin Hill, Hornchurch, North Weald and West Malling. RAF losses started to climb and were now close to matching those of the Luftwaffe.

## RAF REPRIEVED

However, just as they were close to achieving their operational goal, the Germans switched their attacks to the cities of Britain, notably London. Why the Luftwaffe high command took the pressure off the RAF is still disputed. They might have been convinced that they had broken the back of the British fighter force. An alternative explanation is that a night raid on Berlin by the RAF on August 25 may have enraged Hitler and prompted retaliation. The RAF raid was itself a retaliation for the actions of a Luftwaffe bomber crew which jettisoned its payload over the East End of London.

German air attacks against British cities began on September 7 with daylight raids on London. Carried out by 300 bombers with 600 escorting fighters, these initially enjoyed considerable success – mass incendiary raids caused huge fires around the London docks. On 15 September, the Luftwaffe abandoned its usual practice of sending diversionary attacks to confuse radar and ground controllers – possibly believing that the RAF was a spent force. But the British were waiting.

*Left: A Bf 109E-3 flown by Adolf Galland, one of Germany's greatest fighter aces who commanded a Gruppe of JG 26 during the Battle of Britain.*



# The Dogfighters

## Low-wing monoplanes struggle for air superiority

### Messerschmitt Bf 109E-3

9 Staffel JG 26, Caffiers, August 1940

In the Messerschmitt Bf 109 the Germans had an excellent single seat fighter. Very fast, with decent agility and a good climb and dive performance, its only major drawback was its range, which limited it to escort missions over southeast England. Going as far as London meant that its pilots had only a few minutes of combat time before having to turn for home.



### Supermarine Spitfire Mark 1

No. 74 Squadron, Manston, June 1940

The Spitfire was the best British fighter of its time. A good match for the Bf 109, it was a little more manoeuvrable, but could not accelerate in a dive as quickly. Its eight machine guns could put out a lot of rounds, but they lacked the sheer stopping power of the Bf 109's 20-mm cannon. This Spitfire Mark I was flown by Flight Lieutenant Adolph 'Sailor' Malan during the early part of the Battle of Britain. The South African-born Malan, a former merchant seaman, was promoted Squadron Leader in August, and was to prove one of the most inspiring RAF leaders of the war.

### Hawker Hurricane Mark 1

501 (County of Gloucester) Squadron, Gravesend, August 1940

The Hurricane provided 60 per cent of the RAF's fighter strength in the Battle of Britain. Much slower than the Bf 109, it was nevertheless very agile, and its thick wing made it a very steady gun platform. It was also very tough and could take a considerable amount of combat damage. No. 501 Squadron had been the first Auxiliary unit to be equipped with the Hurricane, and as part of 11 Group in the southeast was intensely involved in the battle against the Luftwaffe.



## Luftwaffe strength

Luftwaffe forces were divided into three air fleets: *Generalfeldmarschall* Albert Kesselring's Luftflotte 2 in eastern France and the Low Countries, *Generalfeldmarschall* Hugo Sperrle's Luftflotte 3 in western France, and *Generaloberst* Hans-Jürgen Stumpff's Luftflotte 5 operating across the North Sea from bases in Scandinavia. The combined force totalled 1,260 long-range medium bombers, about 320 dive-bombers, 800 single-engined and 280 twin-engined fighters and some reconnaissance aircraft. Luftflottes 2 and 3 alone could call on 750 long range bombers, 250 dive bombers, 600 single-engined and 150 twin-engined fighters. However, operating at a greater distance, Luftflotte 5 in Scandinavia was obliged to operate without single-seaters.



## Royal Air Force strength

Ranged against the Luftwaffe was RAF Fighter Command, led by Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding. Each of the major areas of the country was covered by a fighter Group – 10 Group covered the south-west, 11 Group under Air Vice Marshal Park closest to the enemy in the south-east, 12 Group commanded by Air Vice Marshal Leigh-Mallory was based in East Anglia and the Midlands and 13 Group operated from the north and Scotland. Fighter Command had 900 fighters in the main operational area in 11 and 12 Groups, of which Dowding could commit 600 to action. The RAF were supported by the Chain Home belt of radar stations. Radar was a new invention which had only successfully been demonstrated in 1935.



It could detect high-flying aircraft deep into northern France, though at low level (500 feet or 150 metres) it could only range across the width of the Straits of Dover – about 20 miles (35 kilometres). Information from radar intercepts allowed RAF fighters to be scrambled to attack the Luftwaffe before it had reached its targets. ULTRA intercepts of coded German radio signals decrypted at Bletchley Park also gave Dowding a strategic view of German plans and operations, which meant that he was able to conserve pilots and aircraft. Though some of the radio traffic contained routine items like the strength of Luftwaffe squadrons, this helped to build up a picture of the enemy and his losses.



# HITLER'S BATTLES 5



**Above:** One of the keys to British survival was the sector control centre, which together with good communications allowed fighter controllers to make the most effective use of limited resources.

The respite from attacks had allowed the Fighter Command to replenish its fighter strength in the south, and the attacks on London gave 11 Group in particular more time to get fighters aloft. Air-Vice Marshal Park was able to get paired squadrons airborne, and Air-Vice Marshal Leigh-Mallory's 12 Group formed even larger formations in what were known as 'Big Wing' attacks. The Luftwaffe was met by massed fighters, and by the close of the day had lost 60 aircraft. Total Luftwaffe losses since September 7 had reached 175 aircraft, all caused by a force they had been told was beaten.

Two days later, as Hitler turned his attention towards the Soviet Union, he postponed Operation Sealion indefinitely. But for RAF fighter pilots and Royal Artillery anti-aircraft gun crews the pressure did not end,

as the Luftwaffe switched to night raids against British cities, especially London. Up to 400 bombers attacked each night until mid-November, weather permitting. Contrary to pre-war theories, the raids, known to the citizens of the UK as the Blitz, did not cause panic, or break the national will.

There was a lull in mid-winter, but the raids restarted in the new year. Luftwaffe bombers also attacked Liverpool, Birmingham, Plymouth and Bristol by night.

Between 19 February and 12 May 1941, the Luftwaffe intensified attacks against London and the Channel ports. Some raids were flown by single fighter-bombers, flying low across the Channel to keep under the British radar cover. Larger

raids employed as many as 700 bombers; the intensification of the bombing was to some extent a cover for the German military redeployment eastwards. By 21 May the Luftwaffe had shifted 90 per cent of its forces to eastern Germany, occupied Poland and East Prussia, ready for operations against the USSR.

## FACTS AND FIGURES

During their attacks on Britain in 1940 and 1941, the Luftwaffe dropped 54,420 tons of bombs and incendiaries. Though the attacks could hardly be called precision strikes, being primarily aimed at area targets, they killed 40,000 people and injured 86,000. Two million homes were destroyed, of which 60 per cent were in London.

Air losses were grossly exaggerated at the time, but the best postwar estimates are that the Luftwaffe lost 1,294 aircraft

between 10 July and 31 October 1940, while the British lost 788. During the night Blitz, the Luftwaffe lost a further 600 bombers, though many of these were due to flying accidents in bad weather. However, by 1941 RAF had become a formidable enemy even at night, with twin-engined radar-equipped night fighters supplemented by radar-controlled searchlights and anti-aircraft guns on the ground.

The Battle of Britain was the first major setback for Germany's armed forces. Even though the British were gravely weakened, they remained implacably opposed to Hitler and the Nazis, and would provide one of the springboards by which Germany would ultimately be defeated. For now, the Luftwaffe's attentions were turned eastwards, while the battle against Britain would shift to the Atlantic and the U-Boats of the Kriegsmarine.



**Above:** A Bf 109 attacks a Spitfire. Shot-down RAF pilots who survived could be flying within 24 hours or less. Shot-down Germans went straight to the POW camps.



**Below:** Hawker Hurricanes of No.56 Squadron scramble from North Weald during the Battle of Britain. Although German pilots feared the Spitfire, more Luftwaffe aircraft were destroyed by Hurricanes in the summer of 1940.





# Bombers over England

Germany's airborne spearhead in action.

## Messerschmitt Bf 110C-2

1/ZG 52, Charleville, June 1940

The Messerschmitt Bf 110 twin-engined fighter was big, fast, and had the long range its smaller sibling lacked. It also had a formidable armament packed in its nose – four 7.92 mm MG 17 machine guns and two 20 mm MG FF cannon. But it proved a major disappointment over Britain, where it was no match for the much more agile Hurricane and Spitfire. It did achieve some success as a high-speed fighter-bomber, but without an escort of single-engined fighters it could succeed only in low-level surprise attacks.



## Junkers Ju 87B-1

7./StG 51, (renamed 4./StG 1), Angers, June 1940

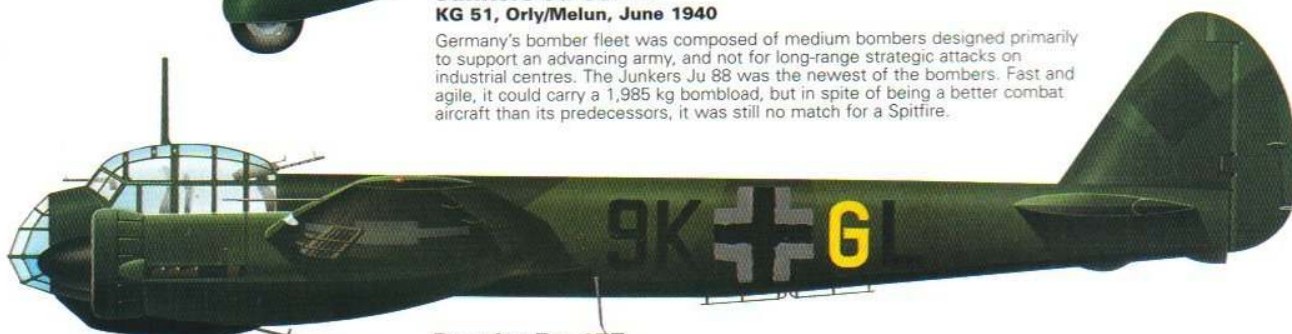
The Junkers Ju 87 Stuka had proved a battle winner in Spain, Poland and France, winning a reputation as an awesome close support dive bomber. It normally carried a single 550 kg bomb with smaller bombs underwing, which it could deliver with great accuracy. However, in combat against high performance fighters it proved to be horribly vulnerable. Slow and cumbersome in flight, it was hacked out of the sky in large numbers by the RAF, and had to be withdrawn from the battle.



## Junkers Ju 88A-1

KG 51, Orly/Melun, June 1940

Germany's bomber fleet was composed of medium bombers designed primarily to support an advancing army, and not for long-range strategic attacks on industrial centres. The Junkers Ju 88 was the newest of the bombers. Fast and agile, it could carry a 1,985 kg bombload, but in spite of being a better combat aircraft than its predecessors, it was still no match for a Spitfire.



## Dornier Do 17Z

4./KG 2, Arras, June 1940

The Dornier Do 17 and Heinkel He 111 had been considered high-speed aircraft before the war, but in the face of determined opposition from modern fighters they proved vulnerable, and required a strong escort of Bf 109s. The Dornier in particular, with its small combat load of 1,100 kg was not suited to modern air warfare, though its reliability made it popular with its crews.



## Heinkel He 111P-2

KG 55, Dreux/Chartres/Villacoublay, late Autumn 1940

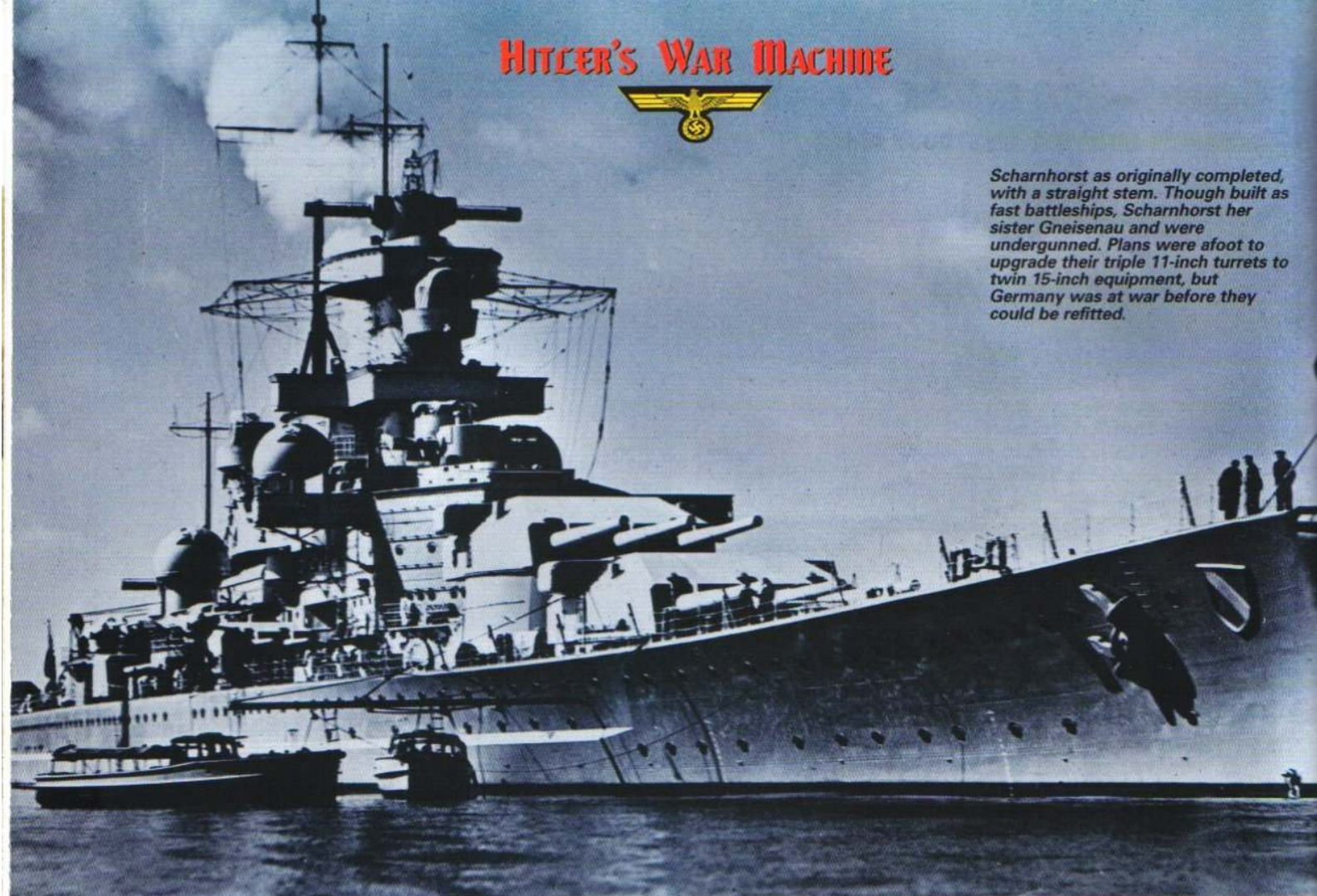
Developed from the single-engined He 70, the broad-winged He 111 was the heaviest bomber available to the Luftwaffe in 1940. It had a normal bombload of 2,205 kg. Like other German bombers, it had weak defensive armament and was easy meat for a determined fighter pilot. However, it was tough and reliable, and would continue to serve to the end of the war.







*Scharnhorst as originally completed, with a straight stem. Though built as fast battleships, Scharnhorst her sister Gneisenau and were undergunned. Plans were afoot to upgrade their triple 11-inch turrets to twin 15-inch equipment, but Germany was at war before they could be refitted.*



## KRIEGSMARINE THE FÜHRER'S NAVY

**O**N 22 JULY 1939 Grand Admiral Erich Raeder addressed the assembled officers of Germany's U-boat arm. He was there at Hitler's request, to pass on the Führer's assurance that however the international crisis developed, there would not be another war between Germany and Britain. Less than six weeks later, at 1.30 pm on 3 September, German warships received the signal from Naval High Command, "commence hostilities with Britain". It may have been the first time Hitler's

**Although it had grown at an explosive rate from the time Hitler came to power, when war broke out in 1939, the Kriegsmarine was far from ready for war with Britain.**

strategic decisions left the navy in the lurch, but it was far from being the last.

Hitler's decision to invade Poland found the Kriegsmarine in the early stages of a massive construction programme, intended to create a fleet powerful enough to challenge Britain's Royal Navy by the late 1940s. But the fleet committed to war in 1939 was smaller than the French navy. Its two greatest warships, the battlecruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* were unhappy compromises, armed with nine 28-cm (11-inch) guns; British and French capital ships had 15-inch (381-mm) and 16-

inch (406-mm) weapons.

Two 15-inch gun battleships – *Bismarck* and *Tirpitz* – were under construction, but even when the latter commissioned in 1941 Germany would have four big gun capital ships to Britain's fourteen. The British also had seven aircraft carriers, with at least six more building, while the Kriegsmarine had yet to acquire its first. The *Graf Zeppelin* was still nine months away from completion, and its sister ship *Peter Strasser* would not even be launched until the end of 1940. There were only about 20 ocean-going U-boats ready for operations, while the French had



some 70 submarines in service and the British had 50.

Hitler had inherited a very modest naval force when he came to power in 1933, the Reichsmarine's size and composition having been dictated by the victorious Allies in 1919. With the bulk of the once-feared High Seas Fleet at the bottom of Scapa Flow, where it had been scuttled in a final act of defiance, the most powerful warships left to post-war Germany were eight pre-dreadnought battleships, already obsolete by 1914. U-boats, which had inflicted such terrible losses on British merchant shipping during World War I, were forbidden altogether.

### NEW U-BOATS

The navy continued to develop submarine designs in secret, funding the construction of six new boats in Finland and one later in Spain. This clandestine programme was exposed by the German press in 1926, leading to the resignation of the then minister of defence and Admiral Zenker, commander of the Reichsmarine. However, as the political climate changed, the German navy was already poised to break the Versailles Treaty, even before Hitler became Chancellor in January 1933.

A construction programme authorised in 1932 envisaged six 'armoured ships', an aircraft carrier, six new heavy cruisers and 16 submarines.

Hitler had a boyish fascination with the minutiae of naval construction, and took a personal interest in the building plans advanced

*Far right: Accompanied by Admiral Raeder, Adolf Hitler reviews the tiny Kriegsmarine he inherited on coming to power in Germany.*

*Right: The only capital ships Germany was allowed were two ancient pre-dreadnoughts, dating back to the early years of the 20th century.*

*German U-Boats had been a major success in World War I, and in the first half of World War II they were far and away the Kriegsmarine's most successful weapons.*



*Linienschiff Schlesien*







## U-Boats or Battleships?

### Combat efficiency versus national pride

To people growing up in the first half of the 20th century, naval power meant big ships armed with big guns. Few could foresee a time when the battleship did not rule the waves.

Naval professionals were no different: when the Kriegsmarine high command drew up its expansion plans for the 1940s, they were centred on some of the largest battleships ever projected. They would have been monumentally expensive, and would have soaked up a lot of manpower, but they would certainly have been impressive.

One exception was Karl Doenitz. A submarine man through and through, he wanted lots of U-Boats. With a large submarine force, he felt that any potential maritime enemy could be blockaded and starved into submission. He was nearly right.



A Type VII U-Boat passes the Scharnhorst. U-Boat commanders argued that for the cost of one capital ship, you could build and crew a whole flotilla of submarines.

by the Kriegsmarine. However, his exceptional memory, especially for technical data, masked his very uneven grasp of technological issues and an even more limited mastery of maritime strategy.

Determined on a rapid expansion of the navy, he sought a formal agreement with Britain rather than risk immediate confrontation. The result was the 1935 Anglo-German naval agreement, under which

Germany was allowed to build modern capital ships up to a ceiling of 35 per cent of the Royal Navy's battleship tonnage. Incredibly, given the damage they had done 20 years earlier, the British ultimately agreed that Germany could expand its submarine fleet to achieve parity with that of the Royal Navy.

By 1938 Hitler's aggressive foreign policy had triggered a belated but rapid re-armament programme in Britain. Hence the

concern voiced by German naval officers, conscious that their building plans were still far from complete. If war came, they intended to attack British shipping with their modest force of U-boats and 'Deutschland' class *Panzerschiffe* or 'armoured ships'. These were long-range heavy cruisers designed to out-run anything they could not out-fight, and with six 280 mm guns, they were theoretically a match for anything except a full-sized

battleship. Dubbed 'pocket battleships' by the British, these unique warships could have no other purpose than commerce-raiding, with every design consideration subordinated to firepower and endurance. During the war, the *Admiral Scheer* would sail as far as the Indian Ocean and back, steaming 46,000 miles and sinking 100,000 tons of Allied shipping in the process.

Hitler ordered construction of the *Bismarck* and *Tirpitz* to be speeded up, and stepped up plans to replace the 28-cm guns aboard *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* with battleship-calibre 38-cm guns. Increased quantities of every class of warship were authorised. The 'Z-plan', formally adopted in March 1939, called for eight battleships, five battlecruisers, four aircraft carriers, eight heavy cruisers, 68 destroyers and 249 submarines. The programme would be completed in 1948.

### SUPER-BATTLESHIPS

At the core of the Z-plan were some of the most magnificent battleships ever designed. Three 35-knot battlecruisers, armed with six 38-cm (15-inch) guns and capable of steaming 14,000 miles at 19 knots, were authorised in 1939. In April 1939 contracts were issued for the first two of six 52,000 ton behemoths shipping eight 40.6-cm (16-inch) guns, the keels being laid in July and September respectively. Even larger monsters were to follow: the H41 design was to top 70,000 tons and mount new 42-cm (16.5-inch) guns, and the projected follow-on class were to displace an astonishing 96,555 tons at full load. The latter were scheduled to receive eight 48-cm (18.9-inch) guns, with the third unit mounting weapons with an unheard-of 51-cm (20-inch) calibre! Lest these be dismissed as disagreeably Freudian fantasies of the German leader, it should be noted that most of the



Left: *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* engage a British convoy during a sortie into the North Atlantic. Both battlecruisers were sunk or damaged beyond repair by the British Navy and Air Force.





# KMS Bismarck

As with most German warships of the 1930s, Bismarck was considerably heavier than the international treaty limits which she was supposed to meet. She commissioned in August 1940, and after working up in the Baltic, the battleship attempted to break out into the Atlantic in May 1941. After sinking HMS Hood, Bismarck was hunted down and sunk by the British.

## Main armament:

Bismarck's 15-inch guns were similar in capability to contemporary French and Italian designs. German armour-piercing shells were of poor quality, however.

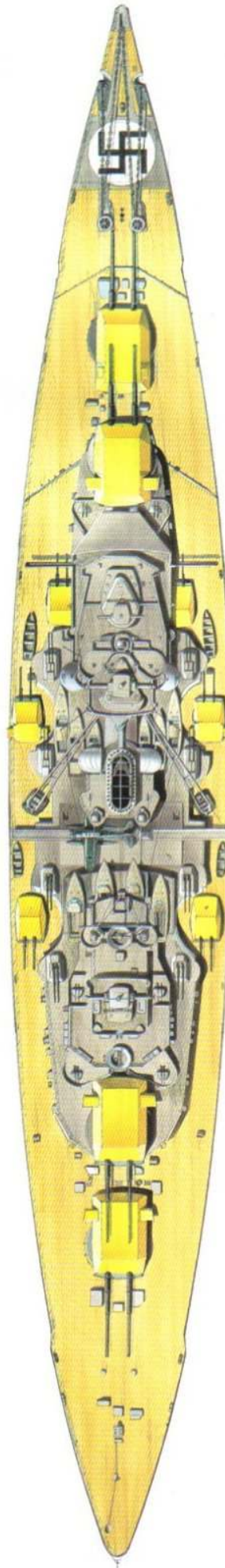
**Design:** Bismarck's internal structure was based on the last battleships of the Imperial navy, but considerably enlarged. As a result its armour protection was not as sophisticated as on contemporary British or American battleships.

**Fire control:** German fire control was generally excellent. During the battle with HMS Hood, both Bismarck and the accompanying heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen hit the British battleship early in the fight. The Hood blew up soon afterwards.

In most respects identical to Bismarck, but with the addition of torpedo tubes, the Tirpitz had an undistinguished combat career. She was sunk by RAF Lancaster bombers.

**Conning tower:** intended to be proof against battleship shells, the conning tower was in fact penetrated by 8-inch shells from British heavy cruisers.

**Colour scheme:** Originally painted grey, Bismarck sailed on her only operational sortie sporting a bright dazzle colour scheme. This was toned down considerably before the unsuccessful attempt to break out into the Atlantic.



**Beam:** Bismarck's broad beam meant that the battleship was very stable in all weathers. Coupled with the excellent German fire control optics, this made Bismarck a very good gun platform.

## SPECIFICATIONS KMS Bismarck

**Displacement:** Nominally 35,000 tons, but actually 41,600 tons normal and 50,150 tons deep load.

**Dimensions:** Length overall 251 m (823 ft 6 in); waterline length 241.5 m (792 ft 4 in); beam 36 m (118 ft); average draught 9.3 m (30 ft 7 in)

**Machinery:** 12 Wagner boilers, 3-shaft

Blohm & Voss geared steam turbines delivering 103 000 kW (138,000 shp).

**Speed:** 29 knots (33.25 mph/53 km/h).

**Armour thickness:** Main belt 320 mm (12.6 in); decks 50-120 mm (2 in/4.7 in); main turrets 177-362 mm (7-14.25 in); secondary turrets 38-102 mm (1.5-4 in).

**Armament:** Eight K34 38-cm (15-inch) 47-calibre cannon in four twin turrets; 12 K28 15-cm (5.9-inch) 55-calibre cannon in six twin turrets; 16 K32 105-mm (4.1-inch) 65-calibre anti-aircraft guns in eight twin turrets; 16 K30 37-mm anti-aircraft guns on eight twin mounts; 12 K30 20-mm anti-aircraft guns.

**Aircraft:** capable of shipping up to five, but normally carried two Arado Ar 196 floatplanes for reconnaissance, light attack and gunnery spotting.

**Complement:** between 2,100 and 2,200 officers and men.



# HITLER'S WAR MACHINE



**Above:** The commerce raiders Orion and Komet operate in company in the Pacific. Armed merchant cruisers like these sank more enemy vessels than conventional warships.

world's major navies were designing, if not actually building, battleships that would dwarf anything then afloat. (Only Japan would actually complete any, and both would be sunk by carrier aircraft by the end of World War II.)

Curiously, the 249 U-boats scheduled to be in service by 1948 was not enough. Admiral Doenitz, the commander-in-chief of Germany's submarine forces, calculated that 300 boats were

required in order to maintain about 100 on patrol in the North Atlantic at any given moment. This was the number he believed necessary to cut Britain's maritime lifeline, and starve the UK into surrender. Doenitz had another objection to the navy's plans: he wanted to concentrate on building the small Type VII U-boat, in his view the ideal submarine for a second campaign against British convoys. It could carry up to 14 torpedoes, had the endurance to operate in the North Atlantic for a month, yet was able to crash dive in 20 seconds. Larger submarines, such as the Type IX already developed, were

slower to seek the safety of the deep, and in Doenitz's experience this was a significant handicap. Worse, from the point of view of the ongoing arms race, Type IXs took longer to build and required more material.

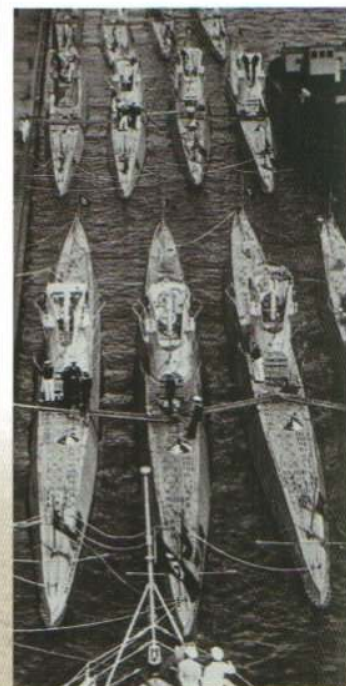
## THE WRONG BOATS

Yet Doenitz was over-ruled; not only were a significant proportion of the new boats to be the less agile Type IXs, but the OKM (*Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine*, or Naval High Command) demanded even larger 'cruiser submarines' with an ill-thought out idea of surface engagements. The proportion of

Type VIIs was further reduced by an equally puzzling order to continue building Type II coastal submarines, of which Germany already had enough to patrol the Baltic and North Sea.

If Hitler's grandiose plans for the Kriegsmarine had been fulfilled, by the end of the 1940s the German navy would have been able to put to sea with two surface action groups, each consisting of an aircraft carrier and four or five of the most powerful battleships in the world. However, the war came too soon, and Admiral Raeder had to make do with what he had.

Raeder had spent his career in



**Above:** A flotilla of Type VII U-boats at its moorings. Although fewer than 30 boats were at sea at any one time in the first two years of the war, the U-boat force sank millions of tons of British and Allied merchant shipping.

**Below:** A high point of the Kriegsmarine's war, as the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen dash through the English Channel fighting off all attempts at interception by the Royal Navy.





# Small Combatants

## Bitter fighting in the Coastal War

surface ships, serving as Admiral Hipper's chief-of-staff during World War I, and had written the two volumes of the German official history dealing with the exploits of the German commerce raiders. He therefore launched a two-pronged surface attack on the Allied convoy system. Both 'Scharnhorst', the 'Deutschland' class pocket battleships and 'Hipper' class heavy cruisers sailed on a succession of raids into the Atlantic. Specially-converted merchant raiders soon followed. Externally, they appeared like innocent merchant vessels, but they carried concealed 15-cm (six-inch) guns and had up to four hidden torpedo tubes. Although lacking armour, they could be highly effective in battle: one raider, the *Kormoran*, actually sank the Australian heavy cruiser *Sydney* in a mutually-destructive engagement.

### RAIDERS AND ESCORTS

The warships enjoyed some successes, but this was exactly the kind of war for which the British Royal Navy had been preparing. Veteran battleships were attached to important convoys, and more than once *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* were forced to pull back when confronted by the daunting bulk of a World War I dreadnought steaming out to defend its charges. The British escorts were very aggressive, even when hopelessly outgunned: the armed merchant cruisers *Rawalpindi* and *Jervis Bay* sacrificed themselves in battle to win time for their convoys to scatter.

The German campaign started badly: *Graf Spee* was caught off Argentina and destroyed in an action that did nothing for the Kriegsmarine's confidence. The 'Hipper' class cruisers lacked

Many of the Kriegsmarine's larger vessels spent most of their time at moorings. For smaller combatants, however, it was a much more active war.

There were two main areas of operations for German small craft. They had to escort coastal convoys through the inshore waters of northern Europe, and they also took offensive action against British convoys in the North Sea and the Channel.

The main strike weapon was the *Schnellboot* or S-Boat (known as the E-Boat to its opponents). Larger and slower than British or American boats, S-Boats were better seakeepers, able to sustain their maximum speeds in rougher weather than British MTBs or American PT boats.

Based in heavily fortified concrete pens, S-Boats attacked all around the English coast, but they concentrated on the area of the Thames Estuary, which became known as 'E-Boat Alley'. However, with increased air patrols and the fitting of radar to British coastal craft the threat had largely been contained by 1944.



Fighting long and hard, the German crews maintained the evil reputation of 'E-Boat Alley', but they became vulnerable to increasingly effective and co-ordinated opponents.

Taken out of context, the effects of German coastal forces were not great in a material sense. Measured in psychological and disruptive terms, however, they were a major nuisance, requiring a large expenditure of scarce resources for the Allies to counter them.

Above: Heavily-armed minesweepers known as R-Boats were also used in the coastal war, primarily as convoy escorts.

Below: A flotilla of S-Boats heads out to sea. Most of their offensive actions took place by night.

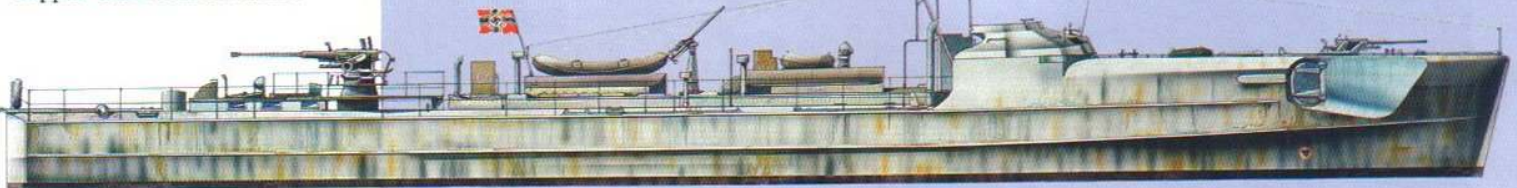


#### Lürssen Schnellboot

Late model S-Boats were fitted with armoured bridges. They capable of speeds of 40 knots, and had a range of 1400 km at 35 knots. Their low silhouettes and quiet diesel engines gave them an advantage until the Allies began using radar more widely.

#### Armament

Typically, S-Boats carried two 533-mm (21-inch) torpedoes with room for two or four reloads. Gun armament varied, but usually comprised 3 or 4 20-mm cannon and a single 37-mm or 40-mm weapon.







*Above: U-boats were generally good sea boats. This was a good thing, since they spent most of their time on the surface, and their main operation area was the North Atlantic.*

*Right: U-Boats were stunningly successful in the first years of the war, sinking millions of tons of Allied shipping. But it came at great cost: U-Boat crews had only a one-in-four chance of surviving the war.*

*Below: Tirpitz saw very little action, but her existence was a threat to the Russian convoys. The British attacked the battleship many times, finally sinking the great vessel with 6-ton bombs.*



endurance, and their complex powerplants proved unreliable. And then came the *Bismarck's* disastrous maiden voyage. Although she sank the old battlecruiser *Hood*, pride of the Royal Navy, the Kriegsmarine's largest battleship never even found an Allied convoy before the British intercepted her and smashed her to pieces.

## NORTHERN THREAT

With the *Bismarck* at the bottom of the Atlantic, the Kriegsmarine withdrew *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau* and *Prinz Eugen* from Brest, where they had posed an alarming threat to the convoy system but were vulnerable to air attack. German heavy units were concentrated instead in Norway, from where they attempted to stop Allied convoys to Russia. But their sorties were characterised by extreme caution, since no Admiral wanted to report another defeat to an already impatient Führer. On 31 January 1942, the navy proudly informed Hitler that it was attacking one of the Arctic convoys, quoting a signal from an over-excited U-boat captain



who claimed to be observing the battle. "I see only red," he reported. So did Hitler when it emerged that the German squadron had broken off the action after a handful of escorts mounted a courageous defence, darting out of smokescreens to launch torpedoes and generally carrying on as if the whole Home Fleet was at hand.

A furious Hitler demanded the complete scrapping of the surface

fleet after this fiasco. Raeder resigned. His replacement, the U-boat commander Admiral Doenitz, partially reversed the decision, but from 1943 German naval hopes rested entirely on the submarine arm. Ironically, the increased pace of surface ship construction in the late 1930s had not been extended to the submarine programme. U-boat construction actually slowed down from 1938-9 and even by

mid-1940 there were only 28 operational boats.

By the time Doenitz had the sort of U-boat fleet necessary to isolate Britain, the war was already lost. British anti-submarine tactics proved increasingly effective, assisted by increased airborne surveillance, as well as better radar and sonar. Once the tremendous resources of the USA were committed to the battle, the U-boats faced an



# Too late to make a difference... Advanced U-boats

From 1943, new Allied tactics, radar, and anti-submarine aircraft made it impossible for U-boats to operate on the surface. Submarines clearly had to be optimised for submerged operations.

The Type XVII featured a hydrodynamically clean hull, a single propeller set in cruciform control surfaces and a Walter closed-cycle propulsion system giving a theoretical maximum submerged speed of around 25 knots.

The concept proved difficult to manage, but the later Type XXI boat was more practical, and was to be the basis for many post-war submarine designs. With

conventional machinery fitted to a hull optimised for underwater operations, the Type XXI was capable of 16 knots submerged. More than 120 were commissioned in 1944 and 1945, but none ever made a successful attack.

Sixty-two of the smaller Type XXIII were completed, with U-2336 making the last U-Boat attack in European waters sinking two freighters in the Firth of Forth. One torpedo was used on each, fired on the strength of passive sonar bearings from a distance of less than 500 metres. It was fortunate for the Allies that this sort of capability had come too late.

*Right: The small size of the Type XXIII limited it to coastal operations. U-2326, seen here tied up alongside the pier at Dundee, was captured at the end of the war.*

*Below: The paint worn away from both the conning tower and stemhead of this Type XXI boat are clues to the high underwater speeds it could attain. Note the foldaway foreplanes, which reduced drag.*



almost impossible task: they simply could not sink ships as fast as Allied yards built them. Above all, the ULTRA code breakers had cracked German naval codes, enabling the Allies to re-route convoys around the 'Wolf Packs'. From mid-1943, the Allies used this intelligence to reinforce convoys with dedicated escort groups and fight their way through. In May of that year they sank 56 U-boats. The Battle of the Atlantic was lost.

The Kriegsmarine's final failure was its complete inability to prevent the Normandy landings. German coastal forces had fought a savage war in the Channel and the North Sea, and managed to inflict grave losses on an amphibious rehearsal off the Dorset coast, but they could do nothing against the massive forces assembled for Operation Overlord. The U-boats were beaten too, forced to evacuate their concrete lairs along the French Atlantic coast and re-

group in Germany and Norway.

The remaining units of the surface fleet, less *Schamhorst* (sunk by the British fleet in the Arctic) and *Tirpitz* (sunk by Bomber Command Lancasters with 12,000-lb bombs), were committed to the Baltic. They provided naval gunnery support for the embattled *Ostheer* as the army fought its long rearguard action against a vengeful Red

Army. The warships sustained the isolated Army Group Courland and organised the evacuation of East Prussia.

It was a grim business as the last ships sailed from ports about to be overrun. Several large refugee-packed passenger liners were sunk by Russian submarines, the *Wilhelm Gustloff* going down with over 8,000 people on board – the greatest

single maritime disaster in history, with five times as many lost as in the Titanic.

The Kriegsmarine had failed to blockade Britain into defeat, and was unable to stop the Allied invasion of Europe. But its evacuation of over two million civilians from the doomed provinces of eastern Germany was perhaps its greatest achievement.



**Right: Rear-Admiral Karl Brünig comes ashore at Felixstowe in May 1945. Within hours he will have surrendered German coastal forces to the Royal Navy.**





# LUFTWAFFE

**In the six years from 1933, the Luftwaffe grew from absolutely nothing to become one of the largest, best-equipped and most powerful air arms in the world.**

**T**HE EARLY LUFTWAFFE was formed almost as soon as the Nazis came to power, though it was kept a clandestine organisation for about two years. It was brought out into the open in 1935 when Hitler overthrew the limits imposed on German military expansion by the Treaty of Versailles. By this time it already had more than 1,000 aircraft and a strength of more than 20,000 personnel.

Expansion was rapid, with modern aircraft being deployed in great numbers. Many were tested for the first time in the Spanish Civil War, when the German *Legion Kondor* supported Franco. The Spanish combat lessons stood Germany in good stead by the time a general European war opened in 1939, and the Luftwaffe proved itself to be a highly effective unit, especially in its primary role, which was the support of advancing troops on the ground.

By the beginning of the conflict, there were around 1,500,000 men in Luftwaffe Uniform. Only 50,000 were aircrew: there were another 100,000 in signals, 160,000 in headquarters, administrative, maintenance and construction jobs about 200,000 in training, and a massive 900,000 manning the anti-aircraft guns of the Reich's air defences.

*Right: Fighter ace Adolph Galland waits in readiness during the Battle of Britain. Over his lightweight uniform tunic he is wearing the lined leather flying suit essential for high altitude operations, and the ensemble is topped by the typically jaunty Luftwaffe cap.*





The summer service cap is a custom-made example by 'Erel', one of pre-war Berlin's best hatters. The original Fliegerdolch or pilot's dagger was introduced for the DLV (Deutscher Luftsport Verband), but Goering liked it so much he approved its use for the Luftwaffe in 1935. This is a second-pattern dagger, introduced in 1937. This example was manufactured by the Solingen firm of Alcoso. The Spanish Cross in Bronze with swords was awarded for bravery during the Spanish civil war, and later came to serve as a campaign medal.

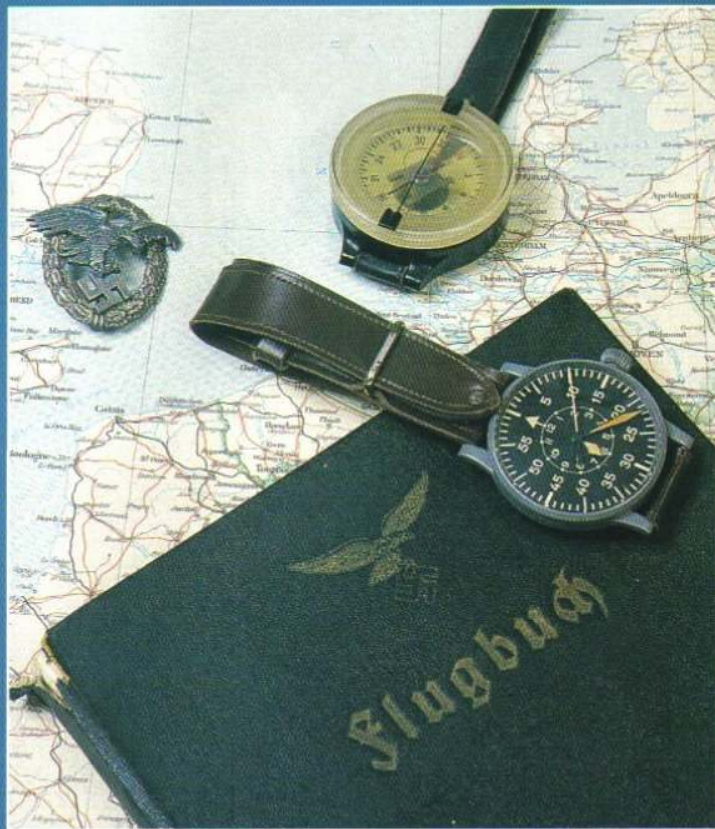


Left: The Luftwaffe Corps of Engineers provided the flight engineers for Luftwaffe bombers and transports. The rank collar patches include those for (clockwise from left) an Oberingenieur, Hauptingenieur, and Stabsingenieur (Senior Lieutenant, Captain and Major/Colonel)



Right: A pilot's badge, wrist compass, pilot's wristwatch and logbook rest on a 1940-era map of northeast France and the English Channel.

Left: The Luftwaffe controlled a significant number of ground troops, including nearly a million Flak personnel. The Hermann Goering combat division was formed in North Africa in 1942, where it was almost totally destroyed. Reformed as a Panzer division in 1943, it was heavily involved in the Italian campaign.







# CAVALRY OF THE CLOUDS

The *Deutsche Luftsports Verband* (German Air Sport Association) was the body by which Germany, forbidden an air force under the Treaty of Versailles, allowed its young citizens to gain experience with flying. DLV members wore a blue uniform, with distinctive rank badges. When the Luftwaffe came into the open in 1935, most of its cadre personnel had come from the DLV, and it made sense to adapt the DLV uniform and insignia for the new air force.

The uniform was similar to that of Britain's Royal Air Force, though few RAF officers wore the riding boots and breeches which were part of the Luftwaffe officer's kit!

Things were much less formal on operations, with other ranks wearing a simple cotton drill uniform or black coveralls. Aircrew wore a lightweight version of their tunic or the comfortable *Fliegerbluse*, a short jacket with concealed buttons designed to be worn under the flying suit. Paratroop combat uniform included a loose camouflage smock and jump boots.

*Below: A four-pocket officers tunic carries a Hauptmann's (Captain's) insignia with a pilot's badge on the left breast pocket. The owner was a veteran – the ribbon bar over the pocket carries a number of World War I awards, including the Iron Cross First Class.*

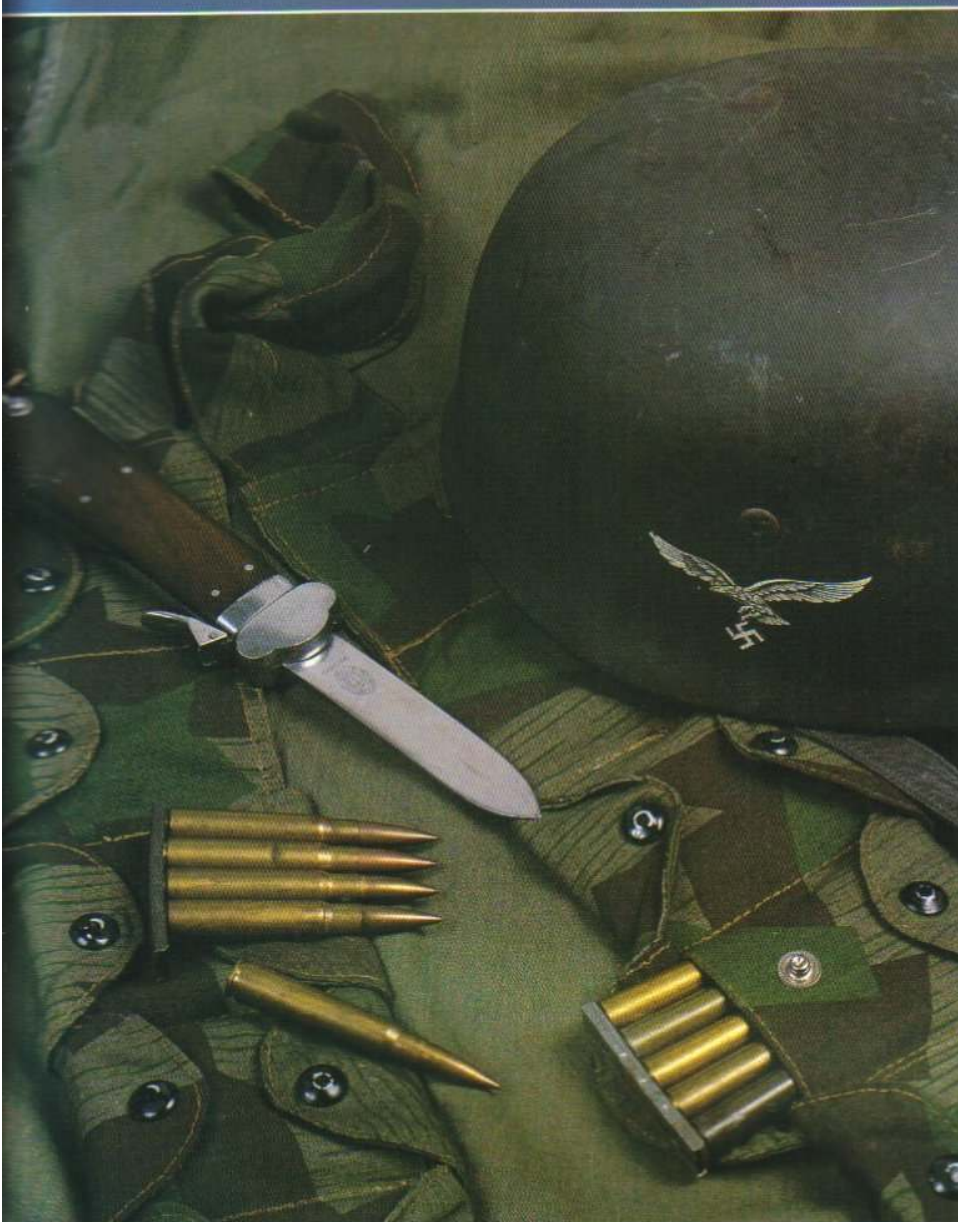


*Below: The uniform tunic with white lapels was only worn by General officers in informal full-dress, undress and walking-out uniform. This tunic originally belonged to Generalmajor Schütze, who was stationed in Prague for most of the war.*

*Above: Three postcards of Luftwaffe Knights Cross holders, produced by Heinrich Hoffmann, together with three colour cards of Luftwaffe subjects by the artist Willrich. Luftwaffe pilots were popular heroes in Germany, and these cards were avidly collected by the children of the period.*







Above: The Luftwaffe dress sword was of a late-medieval/early renaissance pattern. Many were made in the traditional steel town of Solingen, but this example was manufactured by Gebrüder Heller in the town of Marienthal.

Left: Luftwaffe Fallschirmjäger or paratroopers were the first airborne forces to see action, dropping in Norway, Belgium and Holland. However, losses in the great parachute assault on Crete were so high that even though the island was captured, paratroopers were never again used in their designed role. Instead, they were used as elite ground troops. This group has an early helmet (later versions lacked the Luftwaffe Eagle and Swastika decal), a 'gravity knife' switchblade, a jump qualification badge and an ammunition bandolier.



Left: One of the most characteristic items in the Luftwaffe officer's uniform inventory was the peaked cap, invariably with the rim folded down fighter-pilot style. The gold piping and braid identifies this as a General's cap, which is shown along with brocade parade belt, a breast eagle and a Generaloberst's collar tabs. Lower-ranking officers wore a similar cap without the gold braid.

Right: The standard Luftwaffe NCO's cap was similar but with less expensive adornments. The yellow piping around the cap indicates that the wearer was flight crew. The Soldbuch beneath was the German soldier's identity card and service record. This example belonged to an NCO stationed in Paris.





# A Z



## OF THE THIRD REICH

### Dietrich, Otto (1897 - 1952)

Journalist who from 1931 to 1945 was press chief of the Nazi Party. Born in Essen, he fought in World War I, winning the Iron Cross. From 1937 Dietrich was also Joseph Goebbels' State Secretary in the Ministry of Propaganda. He devised the 'Editors' Law,' which

made each editor personally responsible for any story or editorial carried by their newspaper which was judged to be anti-Nazi. Tried at Nuremberg, Dietrich received a seven-year prison sentence in 1949 but was released in 1950.

*Right: Otto Dietrich studied political science after his World War I service. He put his studies into practice in 1932, when he organised the Nazi propaganda campaign for the elections of that year. He also handled Party contacts with business concerns.*



### Dimitrov, Georgi (1882 - 1949)

Bulgarian head of a Communist cell in Germany, Dimitrov was arrested after the Reichstag Fire in February 1933. He was tried alongside Ernst Torgler, head of the German Communists in the Reichstag, and fellow Bulgarians Blagoi Popov and Vassili Tanev. Acting as his own lawyer, Dimitrov managed by clever

cross-examination to make the prosecutor – Hermann Goering – sound like the guilty party. Though found not guilty through lack of evidence, he was held in detention until 1934 but following international pressure he was released and went to the Soviet Union. In 1946 he became Prime Minister of Bulgaria.

*Right: One of the founders of the Bulgarian Communist party, he was exiled in 1919 and spent some considerable time in the Soviet Union. After his release from custody following the Reichstag Fire trial he went back to the USSR, where he became one of the movers and shakers of the Comintern.*



### Dolfuss, Engelbert (1892 - 1934)

From a farming background, Dolfuss was leader of the conservative Christian Social Party and virtual dictator of Austria from 1932. He suspended parliament in 1933 before brutally crushing a Socialist uprising in 1934. Dolfuss opposed Hitler, who was intent on *Anschluss*

between Germany and Austria and who provided support for Austrian Nazi groups. A year after Hitler became Chancellor, German-financed Austrian Nazis tried to seize power. Dolfuss was shot by SS men disguised as Austrian soldiers. However the attempted putsch was premature

and was put down by the authorities. It would be four years before Germany finally absorbed Austria.

*Right: Engelbert Dolfuss was a major stumbling block to Hitler, who was delighted to receive news of his murder.*



### Dönitz, Grand Admiral Karl (1891 - 1980)

Commander of Germany's U-boats during World War II, he used limited resources to great effect, wreaking havoc on Allied shipping in the first two years of the war. He had been a successful U-boat captain in the Great War and remained in the trade between the wars, developing the Wolf Pack tactics which concentrated U-boats on a convoy to attack it in strength. He replaced Grand Admiral Raeder as head of the Kriegsmarine in 1943. A convinced Nazi, he was made the Führer's successor before Hitler committed suicide. Dönitz was Führer for twenty three days before being arrested by the British on 23 May, 1945. Sentenced to ten years at Nuremberg, he was released in October 1956.



**See also Hitler's War Machine**  
**Issue 1: North Atlantic U-boats**  
**See also Hitler's Battles**  
**Issue 8: Battle of the Atlantic 1**

*Above: These small Type II U-Boats were the first of more than 1,100 craft commissioned into Admiral Dönitz' submarine arm of the Kriegsmarine.*



*Above: Karl Dönitz was the only German military commander who had the ability to force Britain out of the war, but he was never given the resources for the job.*



# Dolchstosstheorie

The legend of the 'Stab-in-the-Back' emerged as confused and bitter German fighting men returning to their homes in November 1918 searched for reasons to explain their defeat in World War I. Soldiers, Hitler among them, erroneously held that the Imperial Forces had not been defeated in the field.

This ignored the facts that Allied armies had finally broken the long stalemate in the trenches and were driving the German forces back in the west. On top of that, the Allied blockade had brought the economy to the brink of ruin and the population to the edge of starvation, making Germany ripe

for total collapse – or revolution.

The returning soldiers felt that they, the front line troops, had been "stabbed in the back" by traitors, Social Democrats and Jews at home in Germany.

Pacifists and Liberals came in for their share of the blame, but to Hitler and those who shared his opinions the villains of the

piece were the Bolsheviks and the Jews. They were seen as one and the same, since many of the Soviets set up in the German army and navy late in 1918 were led by Jewish agitators. In his earliest political speeches, made after joining the German Workers Party, Hitler often referred to Jews as 'November criminals'.

## Doctors' Trial.

The trial of 23 SS and military physicians held at Nuremberg in December 1946. The defendants included Karl Brandt, one of Hitler's personal SS physicians; Siegfried Handlöser, Medical Inspector of the Army; Oskar Schroeder, Chief of Staff of the

Luftwaffe's Medical Inspectorate; and Karl Gebhardt, personal physician to Heinrich Himmler and President of the German Red Cross. Each was charged with: 1. Common design or conspiracy to commit war crimes; 2. War crimes against civilians and

prisoners of war, using them as guinea pigs in experiments into the effects of high-altitude exposure, freezing, poison gas, bone and tissue regeneration, infectious diseases, sterilisation, poisons, incendiary bombs and many others; 3. Crimes against

humanity; 4. Membership of criminal organisations. The trial was completed in August 1947 and of the 16 who were found guilty seven were sentenced to death by hanging, five to life imprisonment and four to long prison terms.

## Drexler, Anton (1884 - 1942)

A Munich locksmith and tool maker who became one of the intellectual fathers of National Socialism. He was an extreme nationalist with strong racist views, who was extremely disappointed to be found unfit for war service in 1914.

Drexler wanted to save the working class from the twin threats of communism and capitalism by creating a Germanic middle-class state. In

1918 he set up the *Freier Arbeiterausschuss für einen guten Frieden* (Free Worker's Society for a Just Peace). In October the group merged with the Political Workers' Party led by Karl Harrer, a journalist, to become the *Politische Arbeiterzirkel* (Political Worker's Circle).

On 5 January 1919, it became the German Workers' Party. Drexler was content to be one of the leaders of his small group,

but a new recruit, a serving soldier who joined the party in September 1919, had other ideas. His name was Adolf Hitler.

*Right: Although considered one of the founding fathers of National Socialism, Anton Drexler was really a small-scale activist, whose revolutionary ideas were quickly overtaken by events and by the dynamism of Adolf Hitler.*



## Ebert, Friedrich (1871 - 1925)

First President of the Weimar Republic. A left-wing journalist and local Social Democrat politician in Bremen, he was first elected to the Reichstag in 1912. In 1917 he became leader of the 'Majority Socialist wing of the SPD, and in January 1918 took part in the Munitions Workers strike. He became Chancellor

later that year, and on 11 February 1919, he was elected provisional President by the Weimar National Assembly and was later confirmed in office.

During his time as president he steered a middle course between the extremes of the left – suppressing attempted Communist coups, and the right –

defeating the Berlin Kapp Putsch in 1920 and the Munich Beer Hall Putsch in 1923.

*Right: Originally a left-wing journalist, Friedrich Ebert moved to the right of the Social Democrats. Once in power he marginalised the more radical members of his party.*



## Eckart, Dietrich (1868 - 1923)

Nationalist and anti-Semitic journalist, dramatist, poet and pamphleteer who coined the phrase *Deutschland Erwache!* – Germany Awake! – which was adopted as a slogan by the Nazis.

Eckart was an extreme anti-Semite and anti-Communist – one of his favourite sayings was that "Moses was the first leader of Bolshevism". A staunch ally of Hitler, he was crucial to the early development of National

Socialism. He used his wide circle of connections to raise funds to buy the *Münchener Beobachter*, the newspaper which as the *Völkischer Beobachter* became the Nazi mouthpiece.

When he died of a heart attack on December 23, 1923, the Nazis claimed his death had been brought on by a period in prison following the Munich putsch. However, it was more likely his lifestyle – a heavy drinker, he had

been a morphine addict, and had spent some time as an institutionalised psychiatric patient when younger.

Eckart was revered by Adolf Hitler, who dedicated 'Mein Kampf' to his memory.

*Right: A hard-drinking, none-too-stable anti-communist and virulent anti-Semite, Dietrich Eckart was something of a mentor to the young Adolf Hitler*





## Edelweiss Piraten

The 'Edelweiss Pirates' were members of an informal but widespread Catholic youth organisation banned by the Nazis. Although ostensibly

meeting to go hiking in the country, the Gestapo believed that they were in contact with political dissidents, deserters and escapees from concentration

camps. In a crackdown in 1944, known members were arrested and questioned – twelve were hanged publicly in Cologne in November as an example to their

fellows. At one time the Gestapo believed that nearly a quarter of the Hitler Youth members of the industrial town of Krefeld belonged to Edelweiss groups.

## 'Edelweiss,' Operation

The code name for the Directive issued by Hitler on July 23, 1942 for the attack by Army Group A on the Baku oilfields in the Caucasus. Commanded by Field Marshal Ewald von Kleist, the drive reached as far as Maikop by September 1942, but not the major fields at Baku. The operation had to be abandoned after the fighting at Stalingrad threatened to cut off German forces in the south.

*Right: German troops march through the hot dry summer of 1942 as they head for the oilfields of the Caucasus. The drive to capture that strategic resource was to leave the Wehrmacht extended along a long supply line, vulnerable to counter attack. Von Kleist's Army Group had not reached the oil fields before the Soviet attack at Stalingrad forced them to retreat.*



## 'Eiche,' Operation

'Eiche' or 'Oak' was the code name for the German operation to rescue Benito Mussolini, the deposed Duce of Italy. Hitler insisted on the operation, possibly out of liking for his fellow dictator, but more likely so that the Führer could use him as a figurehead to a puppet fascist government in northern Italy.

Mussolini was being held by the Badoglio government at a hotel atop the Gran Sasso d'Italia, the highest point in the Abruzzi Apennines. It was a secure prison: the only access was via a funicular railway. On 13 September, 1943 an elite team of German *fallschirmjäger* – paratroopers – made a glider assault on the mountain top. Commanded by the flamboyant

*Right: Otto Skorzeny buckles Benito Mussolini into the cramped cockpit of a Fieseler Storch observation plane, before taking off from the Gran Sasso.*

*Far right: The rescued Mussolini is greeted by senior German officers before being presented to the Führer. Privately, Hitler was dismayed at the state of his fellow dictator, whose normally massive self-esteem was gone.*

SS commando Otto Skorzeny, the attack caught Mussolini's carabinieri guards completely by surprise. They were overcome within minutes, and minutes later Mussolini was being bundled into a Fieseler Storch light aircraft along with Skorzeny.



## Eichmann, Karl Adolf (1906 - 1962)

Austrian-born SS officer charged with organising the destruction of millions of Jews. As a child in Linz the small, dark-complexioned Eichmann had been nick named *der kleine Jude* or 'The Little Jew', which may have fired a life long hatred of Jews. He joined the Austrian Nazi party in 1932, moving to Berlin in 1933 and joining the SD a year later.

In 1935 Eichmann became head of the Office for Jewish Emigration. In this capacity he made a short visit to Israel in 1937 but was ordered out by the British Mandate Police.

In 1939 Eichmann oversaw the expulsion of Jews from Austria and Bohemia, and after the Wannsee Conference in 1942, he became the organiser of the 'Final Solution'. In August 1944, after half a million Jews had been deported from Hungary to die at Auschwitz, he reported to Himmler that four million European Jews had died in extermination camps and two million had been killed by Einsatzgruppen.

Although captured at the end of the war, he escaped from Germany in 1945. In 1960 Eichman was tracked down by

Israeli agents in Argentina, where he was living under an assumed name. Kidnapped and smuggled back to Israel, he was tried, found guilty of mass murder and crimes against humanity, and was hanged at Ramle gaol.

*Right: Eichmann's first idea for dealing with Europe's Jews was to deport them all to Madagascar, but by 1941 this had given way to mass murder by the Einsatzgruppen and then in the death camps. Eichmann's defence at his trial was that he was "only obeying orders..."*





## Eicke, Theodor (1892 - 1943)

SS officer and first inspector of concentration camps. After service in the army and police Eicke joined the Nazi party and the SS, becoming commandant of Dachau in June 1933. He was made inspector of concentration camps and SS guard formations and promoted to Gruppenführer in April 1934. Eicke developed the techniques later used throughout the concentration camp system, establishing detailed criteria for punishment. These included

flogging, reprimands and solitary confinement.

After the Night of the Long Knives in 1934, Eicke shot Ernst Röhm in his cell, after the SA leader refused to commit suicide. In November 1939 Eicke took command of the third Waffen-SS Division – the *Totenkopf*, so named because it was formed around a nucleus of SS camp guards. Under his command it fought in France and the Soviet Union. Eicke was killed in action

on February 26, 1943 when his Fieseler Storch liaison aircraft was shot down at Oerka near Kharkov. The aircraft crashed behind Soviet lines and a patrol of volunteers penetrated enemy lines to recover the body.

*Right: A brutal thug who had failed at every career turn, Theodore Eicke was rescued by Himmler from a lunatic asylum and hand-picked to run the SS concentration camps.*



## Ein Volk! Ein Reich! Ein Führer!

"One People! One Government! One Leader!". One of the key Nazi slogans used widely in

speeches and in propaganda material. Coined and made popular in Hitler's run up to

power in the late 1920s and early 1930s, it was used extensively after he became Chancellor in

1933 and would continue to be heard until 1945.

## Eindeutschung

Germanisation was the term used for the somewhat arbitrary process of designating foreign

nationals as German, especially those living in areas to which Germany had some historic

claim. Poles living in the Baltic coast areas incorporated into 'Greater Germany' were made

into Germans, as were Frenchmen from the border provinces of Alsace and Lorraine.

## Einsatzgruppen

Special Action Groups – mobile murder squads which operated behind the advancing armies in Poland in 1939 and the Soviet Union in 1941. In the USSR they not only executed Jews but also Soviet Commissars, partisans, bandits and anybody resisting the occupying power. There were about 3,000 men in the squads, mostly from the SD, the Gestapo, the Kriminal Polizei and the SS.

They were formed into four *Einsatzgruppen* which were subdivided into *Einsatzkommandos* or *Sonderkommandos*. After Himmler witnessed the botched execution of Jewish women and children in Minsk, he ordered that shooting was to be replaced with gassing using mobile vans. By 1945 the *Einsatzgruppen* had killed at least 700,000 Jews in Russia, with probably as many dying at the hands of death squads formed by Police Battalions, SS units and collaborators. There are no figures for the number of Soviet Commissars killed.



*Above: The first Einsatzgruppen were employed in Poland in 1939. Here SS troops round up Polish intellectuals following the conquest of the country.*

*Right: By the time Germany invaded the USSR, the Einsatzgruppen had one function: to find and kill people, primarily Communist party functionaries, resistance fighters, and Jews.*



## Einsatzstab Rosenberg

The 'Rosenberg Task Force' was a group headed by Party ideologue Alfred Rosenberg whose function was to confiscate great works of

art from France and other occupied countries. Between 1940 and 1944 it appropriated 21,903 art objects of all kinds,

which were brought to Germany in 29 shipments filling 137 freight cars. The better works were selected by Goering for his own

collections. The paintings removed from the Louvre in Paris alone were valued at £2 billion.



# A Z OF THE THIRD REICH

## Eintopf

**Eintopf** – One-Pot Meal – was a propaganda term used by the Nazi Government both before and during World War II. Originally intended as a charitable gesture, families were

urged to eat a single-pot stew at least once a week during the winter months (between September and March). The money thus saved was then supposed to be donated to the

needy as part of the *Winterhilfswerk* or Winter Relief programme, and widely publicised 'flag days' ensured that everybody was reminded of their duty.

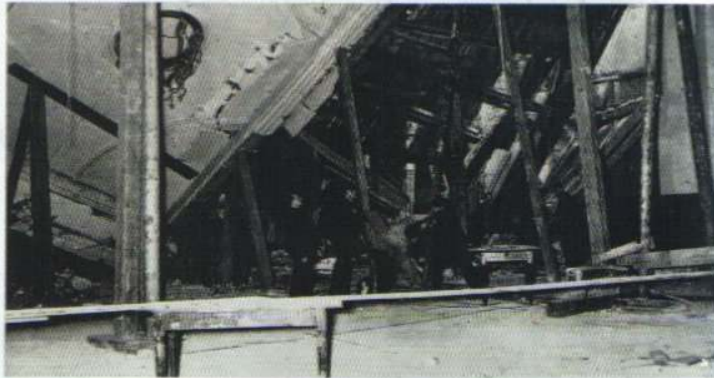
During the war, however, the *Eintopf* meal was designed to conserve food, especially meat, and it was described as 'the meal of sacrifice for the Reich'.

## Elser, Johan Georg (1903 - 1945)

A carpenter and former trade union official accused of an attempt to kill Hitler in November 1939. He was said to have placed a time bomb in the *Bürgerbraukeller* where Hitler traditionally spoke on the anniversary of the 1923 Beer Hall putsch. The bomb exploded killing seven people and wounding 63 - however for the first time Hitler had cut short his speech and left early. Elser was arrested and sent as a special prisoner to Sachsenhausen and thence to Dachau. The Germans

claimed that Elser was working for British Intelligence. However Captain Payne-Best, a British agent and fellow prisoner in Dachau said that Elser had been framed by the SS in a plot to build support for Hitler. Elser was shot by the SS in April 1945

*Right: The wrecked remains of Munich's Bürgerbraukeller, showing the force of the bomb which - according to the SS - was designed to kill Hitler. It may have been the SS who instigated the whole plot.*



## Endlösung, die

The Final Solution was the cover name used by the Nazis for the extermination of European Jewry. Early in 1942 a meeting of senior SS and Nazi officials was called by SS Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, to be held at Wannsee in Berlin.

On January 20, the Wannsee Conference considered a brief from Hermann Goering calling for 'a final solution of the Jewish question'. The discussion was in general terms, but Heydrich explained that Jews were to be deported to labour camps where a majority would "fall through natural diminution" and any survivors "would be treated accordingly". The euphemism

disguised the murderous process which would result in the deaths of about six million Jews.

*Right: A concentration camp guard delivers a corpse to a mass grave after liberation in 1945. The 'Final Solution' saw between four and six million Jews killed and disposed of all in the name of Nazi racial purity.*

**See also The Holocaust**

**Issue 1: Selected to die**

**Issue 2: Death factory**

**See also Hitler's Henchmen**

**Issue 2: Reinhard Heydrich**



## Entartete Kunst

**Entartete** or Degenerate Art was any modern art to which Hitler, whose own artistic style was strictly realistic and representational, objected. In 1936 Hitler instructed Professor Adolf Ziegler, President of the Reich Chamber of Visual Arts and a prominent painter, to confiscate examples of decadent or degenerate art in the Reich. Over 100 galleries were purged and 12,890 works of art by 112 artists were removed. Many were destroyed but some were shown in the great Munich Exhibition of Degenerate Art over the summer

of 1937. Designed to contrast with the officially approved art on show at the recently opened House of German Art nearby, the degenerate art exhibition attracted more than two million visitors - making it the most popular cultural display ever staged in the Third Reich.

*Right: The entrance to the display of degenerate art which took place in Munich in the summer of 1937. Millions visited the exhibition, far more than went to the officially approved art being exhibited nearby.*





# COMING IN THE NEXT VOLUMES OF **HITLER'S** Third Reich

## SECRET HITLER FILES

Hitler the military leader:  
Genius or fool?



## THE HOLOCAUST

Into the  
Ghetto



## HITLER'S HENCHMEN

Albert Speer  
Rudolf Hess

## HITLER'S BATTLES

Assault on Crete

## INSIDE THE REICH

Hitler Youth:  
Creating a Nazi Future



## HITLER'S WAR MACHINE

Assault Artillery  
Messerschmitt Bf 109  
Battleships

## NAZI HORRORS

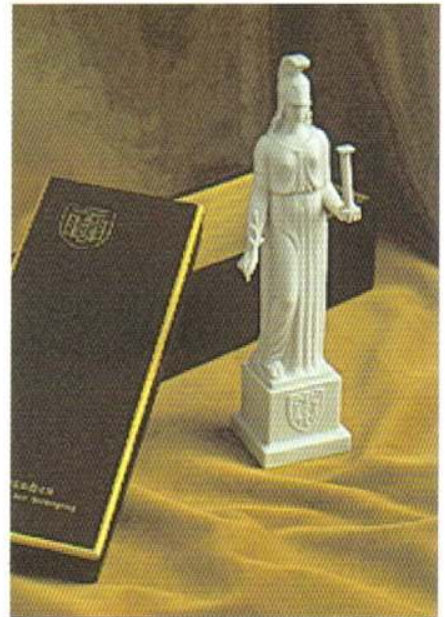
Bergen-Belsen:  
The Concentration Camp  
from Hell

## NAZI SYMBOLS

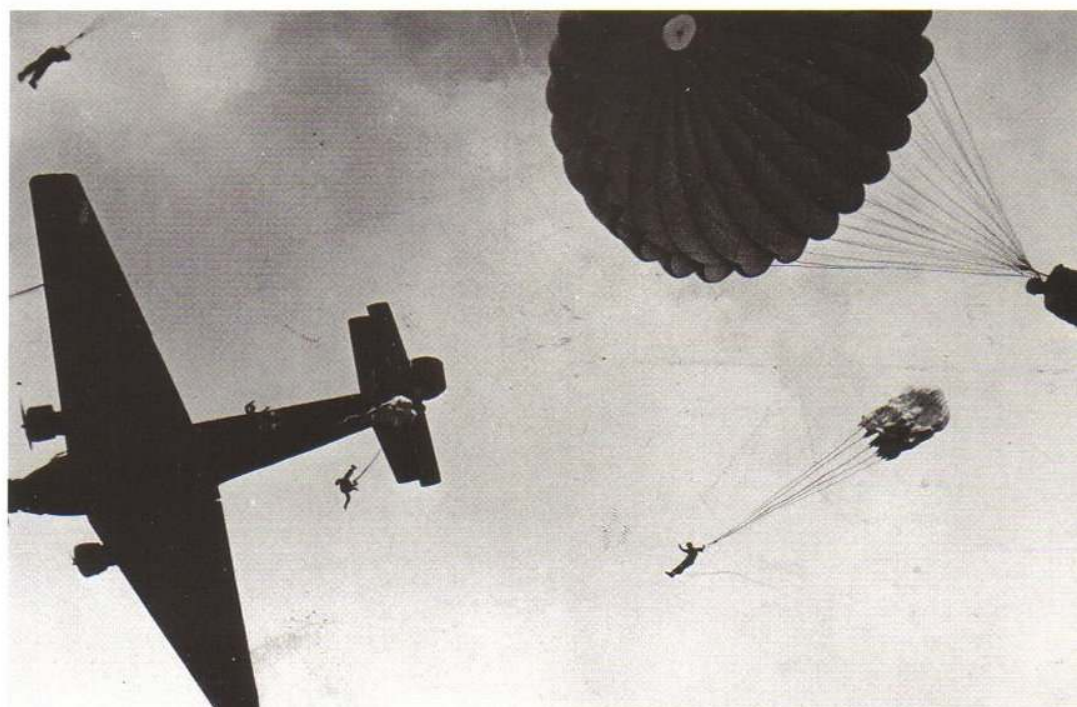
Uniforms and Badges  
of the Panzer troops

## INSIDE THE THIRD REICH

Art under the Nazis



## A-TO-Z OF THE THIRD REICH





# IN THIS VOLUME OF **HITLER'S** **Third Reich**

## **SECRET HITLER FILES**

What kind of child was Adolf Hitler? Did he ever give any signs of the monster he was to become?

## **NAZI HORRORS**

**Massacre at Babi Yar:**  
How the Einsatzgruppen cleared the Jews from Kiev, killing more than 33,000 men, women and children in just two days.



## **HITLER'S BATTLES**

Britain stood alone against the might of Hitler's forces. But to conquer the British, he had to cross the Channel, and to do that he needed control of the air. The result was the Battle of Britain, the loss of which would ultimately cost Germany the War



## **INSIDE THE THIRD REICH: HITLER'S HENCHMEN**

Joseph Goebbels was the most intelligent of Hitler's followers. A genius at propaganda, he created the public face of Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich.



## **INSIDE THE THIRD REICH**

The rise of the Sturmabteilung—the brown-shirted SA who were the Nazi Party's streetfighting warriors and thugs.

## **HITLER'S WAR MACHINE**

**Kriegsmarine:**

Hitler inherited a relatively small navy when he came to power, but he had grandiose plans to build the world's most powerful fleet.

